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SOVIET NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART:  
THE SOVIET APPROACH TO NAVAL WAR FIGHTING

By

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## CHAPTER ONE

### FORMAL DEFINITIONS

There is a Soviet naval operational art. It is real. The Soviets are in deadly earnest about it. They theorize about naval warfare in terms of the application of naval operational art to the successful completion of naval operations. They will plan naval strategic operations in accordance with that art and execute the planned operations to achieve strategic objectives in vast geographical areas of strategic importance to them called TVDs (Theaters of Strategic Military Action).<sup>1</sup>

As military pedants, the Soviets have established an extraordinarily coherent grammar of armed warfare.<sup>2</sup> Systematically and with claims of "scientific" rigor, the Soviets designate Naval Operational Art as part of Soviet Military Operational Art and bind the navy with its general principles. For the Soviets the general principles of Military Operational Art are identical with the general principles of Naval Operational Art. As Russians and survivors of a tough historical past of revolution and war, the Soviets reluctantly have begun to wrestle with the special features inherent in naval warfare.

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<sup>1</sup>TVD is the Soviet acronym for teatr voyennyKh deystviy or theater of strategic military action (TSMA).

<sup>2</sup>The Soviets, for example, use the term, armed warfare, in pedantic distinction to other warfare conducted in most spheres of social interaction without the firing of weapons.

During the past approximate eight years with the shift toward emphasis on extended conventional warfare, Soviet naval writers have characterized naval operations in various ways in terms of processes (e.g., reconnaissance, strike, command and control) and features (oceanic terrains) that have clarified significantly the principles of naval operational art.

The Soviets claim a mastery of military operational art based on their success in The Great Fatherland War and the application of the Marxist-Leninist historical and scientific dialectic (logic) to military science, doctrine, and art in the post-war period. They claim operational superiority over the Germans in the Second World War and similar superiority over the armed forces of the bourgeois, capitalist states arrayed against them at present. With compelling historical argument, the Soviets claim that the Napoleonic revolution in warfare, and, in particular, the advent of mass armies (armed forces), obviated any single battle from achieving the strategic objective of a war. Soviet military theoreticians note that the Napoleonic revolution demanded a new form of war fighting activity described as the military operation. For the Soviets, of course, the term military operation does not have the same more or less generic meaning of military combat activity that is common in the West. For the Soviets, the military operation is the combat carried out in a given time and place to achieve unified strategic objectives and consisting necessarily of two or more battles (engagements, or strikes and accompanying maneuver) requiring the application



of operational art for direction and coordination. This mini-definition of the Soviet military operation shows rather neatly the pedantry associated with Soviet military theory. For the Soviets, a battle is a battle -- combat carried out by tactical formations according to tactical principles and having the purpose to accomplish tactical missions, the most important of which are set by operational art. A ground battle conducted by a Soviet army division is not to be confused with an operation coordinated by an operational level front or independent army headquarters. Similarly, a naval strike conducted by a formation including first rank surface ships is not to be confused with a naval operation coordinated by an operational level fleet headquarters.

With relation to naval warfare, the Soviets note that naval art had produced by the beginning of the First World War, "a new form of fleet combat activity -- the naval operation [italics in original] -- which created the need for appropriate measures for its support."<sup>3</sup> Imperial Russian naval thinkers and later Soviets linked larger navies and diverse higher performance naval weapons with a revolution in naval warfare demanding the coordinated naval operation in place of the previous brief, simple, surface ship engagement. With considerable systematic rigor, the Soviets created operational art to string together the battles,

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<sup>3</sup>Office of Naval Intelligence, Soviet Military Encyclopedia, Selected Translations of Naval Interest, Collection I, January 1983, alphabetical entry: Naval Art. This publication hereinafter cited as ONI, SME, Naval.

encounters, engagements, actions, strikes, and maneuvers of the tactical formations into operations. The Soviets note, for example, that the operational art of each service of the armed forces proceeds in its development from the general principles of operational art with regard for the specific nature of the organizations, technical outfitting, sphere of operation, combat capabilities, and methods of combat employment of each service.<sup>4</sup> The Soviets insist that the Navy is bound by the general principles of operational art while simultaneously demanding the "imaginative application" of the general principles to the specific situations unique to the naval operation.

The Soviet naval operation is the most important key to the understanding of Soviet naval operational art. The modern naval operation exists in terms of wartime historical example and peacetime exercise, and in the Soviet navy, is orchestrated by a system of planning and execution described as naval operational art. The Soviets leave little doubt about the general form of orchestration stating that:

Naval Operational Art (Operativnoye Iskusstvo) encompasses theory and practice of preparation for and conduct of integrated fleet, naval, and amphibious landing operations, anti-amphibious operations, and employment of naval forces in combined arms, joint, as well as independent operations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>ONI, SME, Naval, I, Naval Art.

<sup>5</sup>Soviet Union, Military Affairs, Military Encyclopedia Dictionary, Volume VI, 17 August 1987, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, JPRS-UMA-87-011-L, alphabetical entry, Naval Operational Art. This publication hereinafter cited as Soviet Union, MED.

In effect, the Soviet naval operation is naval operational art. With some originality, a naval officer at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School has hypothesized that Soviet naval operational art is the Soviet military skill of preparing and executing the plan for the naval operation. The officer suggests that the plan neither creates strategic goals nor engages in combat but serves as a link between strategy and tactics.<sup>6</sup> As such, the plan is necessarily the operation whose substance is the tactical combat orchestrated by the plan.

The Soviets leave little doubt that the naval operation is the sum total of its tactical combat activity. One Soviet authority notes, for example, that even before the Second World War his country had defined with sufficient completeness,

...the content of an operation as the aggregate of battles, actions, strikes, and maneuvers of mixed forces [e.g., naval surface ships, submarines, and naval aviation] coordinated and interrelated by objective, missions, place, and time and conducted under a single concept and plan....<sup>7</sup>

In discussing the revolution in modern war brought about by the mass armies of the French Revolution and the decisive war fighting style of Napoleon, other Soviet authorities echo the same description noting that,

...in military art a new category was conceived--the operation as an aggregate of a number of engagements and encounters by one or several army groupings [i.e., front(s), or in the navy,

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<sup>6</sup>David J. Kern, Soviet Naval Operational Art, Naval Postgraduate School Master's Thesis (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 1988).

<sup>7</sup>Captain 1st Rank G. Ammon, Doctor of Historical Sciences, "Characteristic Features of Naval Operational Art in the First Period of the Great Patriotic War," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 2, 1985, p. 22.



fleet(s)], unified by a single concept and conducted on a broad front for several days.<sup>8</sup>

Putting these two representative descriptions together, we see that the naval operation is the aggregate of tactical combat, e.g., battles, strikes, engagements, and maneuvers, orchestrated by naval operational art to achieve strategic goals.

Soviet descriptions of military operations and operational art such as those recounted above allow us to put together a dictionary style definition of Soviet naval operational art. The limited usefulness of a definition, particularly at this early stage of the description of naval operational art, should be apparent. The definition will be largely a collection of words fraught with ambiguity, and triggering images of the translated Russian words that fit comfortably with a Western outlook. A definition is a fundamental beginning, however, and the following one is suggested as an initial measure of Soviet naval operational art. Given the considerable importance of operational art in potential future Soviet war fighting, it is suggested that the definition be included in future versions of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication Number One, Dictionary of Military Terms:<sup>9</sup>

Soviet Naval Operational Art (Sovetskoye Operativnoye Iskusstvo) is based on the theory that the revolution in modern

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<sup>8</sup>ONI, SME, Naval, I, Battle (Bitva).

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Vice Admiral K. Stalbo, Doctor of Naval Science, Professor, "Some Issues of the Theory of the Development and Employment of the Navy," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 4, 1981, p. 19.



war resulting from the appearance of the mass conscript armies of the Napoleonic period created a situation in which a single combat engagement could no longer achieve victory in a war or campaign. In the navy, the one-time, surface ship engagement was replaced by the Imperial Russian and later Soviet naval operation in which large numbers of diverse naval weapons and platforms engaged in multiple engagements over extended periods of time to achieve strategic goals previously often achieved in a brief, single battle. Soviet Naval Operational Art is the theory and practice of the preparation for and conduct of integrated multiple tactical engagements, strikes, and maneuvers comprising the modern fleet, other naval, and amphibious and anti-amphibious operations. These operations are conducted according to a unified military strategy to achieve Soviet strategic goals in geographical theaters of strategic military action.

Armed at least with the words of a dictionary-style definition of Soviet naval operational art, we should be able to begin to ask the right questions about the phenomenon. One question that comes to mind is: just what are the factors associated with the art that can be systematically broken out and examined to piece together an accurate and useful picture? By examining the following key words in the definition, we can begin to see the factors that make up Soviet naval operational art:

# Soviet Naval Operational Art Key Words in Definition

Words: "strategic goals"	Word: "theory"	Words: "multiple tactical engagements"	Words: "unified military strategy suggests Central, Unified Strategy"	Words: "modern fleet operations" suggest Processes of Naval War
suggest Naval Missions	suggests Principles	suggest Combat Actions		

The Soviets use the modern naval operation to achieve strategic goals. If Soviet naval operational art orchestrates the naval operations, it follows that the art has conceptualized strategic missions for naval forces in order to achieve strategic goals. The Soviets with characteristic pedantic firmness lay out the following strategic missions for naval forces to accomplish in the naval operation. The standard list includes the following seven strategic missions for naval forces:<sup>10</sup>

1. Disrupt Enemy Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)
2. Defend Soviet SLOCs and Naval Bases
3. Defeat Enemy Naval Forces in Closed and Open Seas and Ocean Areas Contiguous with Coasts
4. Destroy Enemy Land Targets
5. Destroy Enemy Carrier Groupings (Anticarrier Warfare, ACW)
6. Destroy Enemy Antisubmarine Forces (Anti-Antisubmarine Warfare, A-ASW)
7. Destroy Enemy Missile Submarines.

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<sup>10</sup> See in Soviet Union, MED, V, pp. 1910, 1911.

The list is revealing. The missions track strictly alongside of the perceived enemy threat and therefore seem to be cast defensively. The list does not include amphibious and anti-amphibious missions, suggesting a doctrinal subordination of the navy to the army in landing and antilanding operations. Given the extreme centralization of planning and control in the Soviet armed forces, the list can be taken to be binding on the Soviet navy allowing Western military planners to anticipate that Soviet naval forces will be conducting naval operations strictly in the mission categories noted.

The Soviets characteristically theorize about the character and course of armed warfare including the part described as military art. Within such a framework of intense theorization, one Soviet authority has described seven principles of military art existing in the contemporary (1972 publication) world.<sup>11</sup> The Soviet authority associates the principles with scientifically derived laws of war and claims that the Soviet principles are superior in scientific rigor and systematic logic to those of the U.S., British, and French armed forces. The authority, Colonel V. Ye. Savkin, lists the following:

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<sup>11</sup>V. Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), see especially Chapter 3 and p. 165. The work was translated from the Russian under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force.

### Seven Soviet Principles of Military Art

1. Mobility and High Tempo of Combat Operations
2. Superiority in Forces and Means on the Main Axis of Operations
3. Surprise
4. Energy in Combat
5. Preservation of Combat Effectiveness of Friendly Forces
6. Conformity of Goal and Plans of the Military Operation to the Actual Situation
7. Coordination.

The Soviets apply these principles to the naval operation and the associated practice of naval operational art. The principles are taken seriously by them and provide a means for understanding the Soviet way in both ground and naval warfare and the many possible combined operations that can be executed by the five branches of the Soviet armed forces and their combat and supporting arms. Surprisingly, with the centralization of military theory in the Soviet Union, one important naval authority recently discussed principles of naval art "under today's conditions" and the principles are somewhat different not only in number but also in type (quality) of action.<sup>12</sup> The explanation for such a situation is probably that the naval authority, Admiral V. Chernavin, presently commander in chief of the Soviet navy, is attempting to emphasize the most important principles and particularly those which may be assuming greater

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<sup>12</sup>See in V. Chernavin, "Regarding Several Categories of Naval Art Under Contemporary Conditions," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 9, 1986, pp. 28-33.



importance under the impact of contemporary strategic and technological change. Chernavin can be assumed to have the authority and self-confidence to do so and discusses and emphasizes the following principles of naval art:<sup>13</sup>

Chernavin's Five Selected Principles of Naval Art

1. Combat Readiness (boevaia sposobnost')
2. Surprise (vnezapnost')
3. Coordination (or Combined Action, vzaimyodeystvie)
4. Maneuver (manevr)
5. Massing (Particularly of Fires in Terms of Strikes) (Massirovaniye).

The principles discussed by Chernavin are important for an understanding of the Soviet naval operation, naval operational art, and the Soviet style of warfare at sea. In breaking out five principles of special importance to the practice of naval operational art, Chernavin can be assumed inadvertently or otherwise to have distinguished such art from military operational art. It is difficult to imagine the principle of concentration of forces and means along the main axis of advance being missing from any list of more important principles. Chernavin leaves it out of his discussion preferring instead to include massing of fires. Both principles -- concentration with its ground-oriented modifiers and massing with its naval (and nuclear) applications -- can be seen to be part of a fundamentally similar pattern of action. Chernavin, in effect,

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

considers concentration extremely important and considers massing of fires as the uniquely naval version of it.

The Soviets theorize that naval operational art conducts both sequential and simultaneous tactical combat activity toward the achievement of strategic missions and the securing of strategic goals. They see the naval operation as the total of the combat actions comprising the operation with a special increased effect (synergism) due to skill in the application of operational art. The Soviets find it necessary, therefore, to distinguish between the single coordinated operation and the operationally orchestrated combat actions comprising the war fighting substance of that single coordinated operation. In carefully structured, encyclopedic descriptions, the Soviets present the following combat actions in armed warfare:<sup>14</sup>

#### Soviet-Designated Combat Actions

1. The Battle
2. The Encounter
3. The Engagement
4. The Strike
5. The Maneuver.

The Soviets specifically delineate the operation as,  
...the aggregate of battles, engagements, strikes and maneuvers coordinated and interlinked in objective, tasks,

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<sup>14</sup>See in, Captain 1st Rank G. Ammon, Doctor of Historical Science, "Characteristic Features of Naval Operational Art in the First Period of the Great Patriotic War," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 2, 1985, p. 22, where he notes the content of an operation as "the aggregate of battles, actions, strikes, and maneuvers," with his "actions" being equatable with encounter and engagement.

place, and time, by various force organizations, conducted simultaneously and sequentially according to a common concept and plan to accomplish missions in a theater (theaters) of [strategic military action)...within a specified period of time.<sup>15</sup>

For the Soviets, battles and encounters are comprised of engagements and the word, engagement, signifies an organized armed clash or combat.<sup>16</sup> The Soviets in turn define tactics as the theory and practice of preparation for and conduct of an engagement.<sup>17</sup> The end result is that all the words describing combat in the Soviet military operation signify tactical combat and associated tactics. Conventional Soviet battles and encounters are comprised of tactical engagements and conventional strikes, the latter being tactically oriented deliveries of conventional ordnance, e.g., missile, torpedo, and naval aviation weapon systems in the case of the navy. From this we can derive the ultra-succinct definition of Soviet naval operational art as the stringing together of tactical engagements and strikes to achieve strategic goals.

The Soviets can move with agility from the higher reaches of military strategy through tactical combat because of their highly centralized, scientific, long-term theories of world history. The Soviets note that naval operational art is dialectically (i.e., logically) connected with military

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<sup>15</sup>See in, Soviet Union, MED, VI, 1987, p. 2148.

<sup>16</sup>See in, ONI, SME, Naval, Collection III, entry: engagement.

<sup>17</sup>See in, Ibid., entry: Tactics.

strategy. With impressive systematic rigor, they continue on to define a single unified military strategy, denying the possibility of a naval strategy while keeping in touch with practical reality by the construction of an elaborate theory of the navy.<sup>18</sup> Soviet naval operational art, the theory of the navy, and military strategy are guided by the general principles of Soviet military art and the particular theories of Soviet naval art. In turn, the Soviets show military art guided by the laws and regularities of military science and the immediate, practical directives of Soviet military doctrine.

Figure One illustrates the centralization, unification, and potential predictability of Soviet military strategy and naval operational art. The figure shows the complete centralization of political and military goals, the concept of a single military strategy, and the implementation of it by realistic naval operational art in appropriate oceanic and sea theaters of strategic military action (TSMAs).

One Soviet military authority, V.G. Kulikov, in an encyclopedia-style commentary on operational art, gives a succinct description of the centralization of Soviet military theory. Kulikov notes that operational art is a component of military art and encompasses the theory and practice of preparing for and conducting joint and independent operations by

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<sup>18</sup>See the authoritative treatment in, Commander in Chief, Navy, Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union, S. Gorahkov, "Questions of the Theory of the Navy," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 7, 1983, especially pp. 29-34.



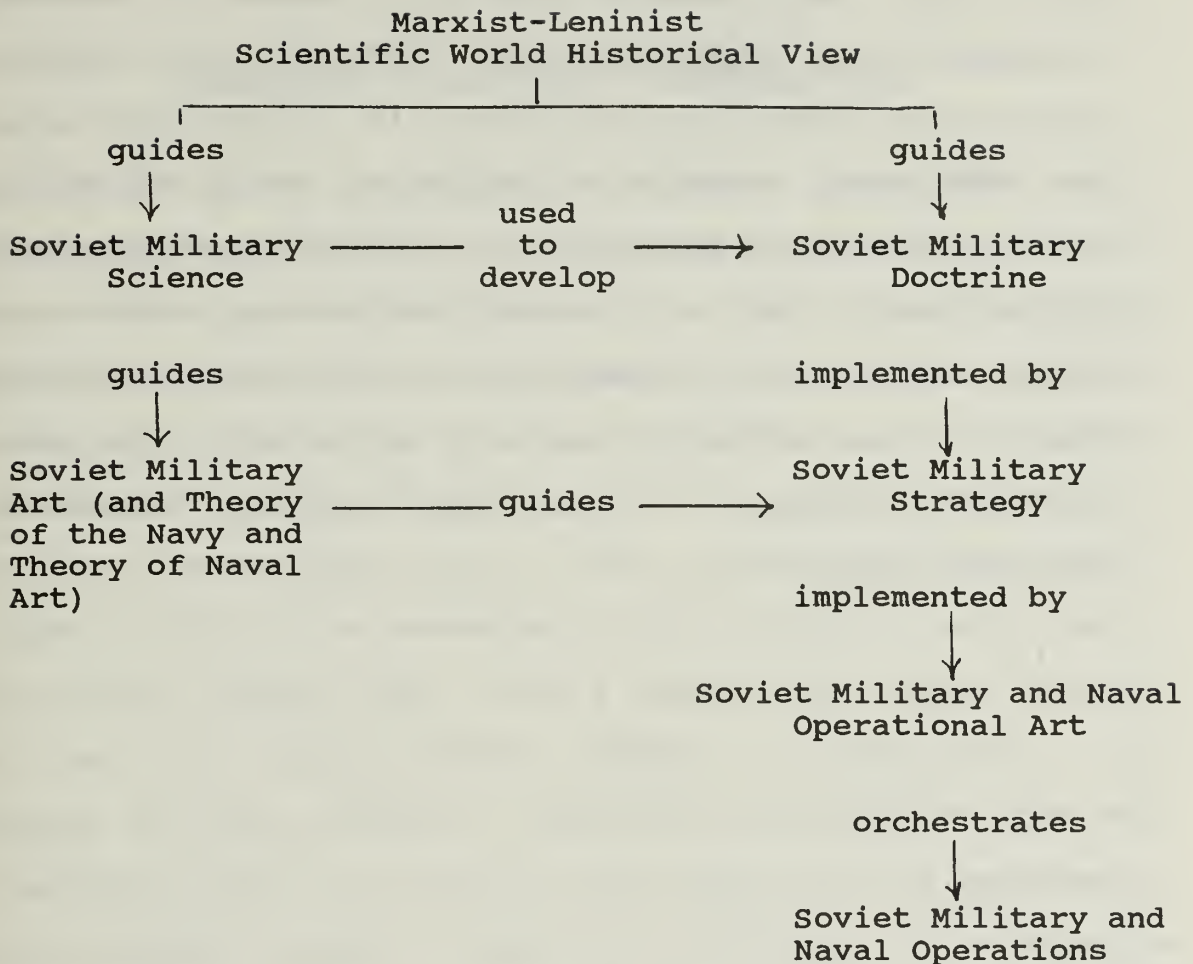


Figure One. The Centralization, Unification, and Potential Predictability of Soviet Military Strategy and Naval Operational Art

forces of the services of the Soviet armed forces. He places operational art neatly between strategy and tactics by stating that "the requirements and provisions of strategy are fundamental for operational art, which in turn determines the missions and directions of tactics."<sup>19</sup> Kulikov then establishes the hierarchial location of operational art by stating that the basic provisions of operational art stems from the principles of military art. The main factors that determine the content and development of Soviet operational and military art in turn are the provisions and requirements of Soviet military science and military doctrine. Figure One reflects Kulikov's views diagrammatically.

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<sup>19</sup>ONI, SME, Naval, III, September 85, entry: Operational Art.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SOVIET NAVAL OPERATION: EXPERIENCE OF THE GREAT FATHERLAND WAR

It is one thing to define Soviet naval operational art in the style of the encyclopedia and dictionary but quite another to piece together an understanding of it. The respected Prussian philosopher of war, Karl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), suggested that the best lectures on war are war itself.<sup>1</sup> It is probably not too much to suggest, therefore, that the best illustration of Soviet naval operational art is naval operational art itself, specifically the art as executed by the Soviets in war itself--nothing more, nothing less. For a continental power, Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union present a particularly rich experience in naval warfare. Observing the Russians from mid-19th century onward, we have to be struck by the peripheral, naval-influenced quality of their war fighting. The Russians conducted campaigns and exercises in the "gray water" of the Black Sea, and Turkish Straits (1840, 1853-56, 1877-78, 1914-17, 1941-45), the waters of the Yellow Sea (1895, 1904-05), and the Baltic and Barents Seas (1914-17, 1941-45). They conducted a dramatic long range "blue water" campaign in the projection of their Baltic fleet to the Pacific in 1904-05. On balance though, the Russians have had an incomplete experience of naval

campaigning. Compared, however, with the Prussians and Imperial Germans, representing another great continental power, they had a vast experience of naval warfare in the period 1840 through the eve of the Great War. During that period and with the additional experiences of the First and Second World Wars, they claim to have come to grips with the revolution in modern war and to have developed naval operational art. Surely naval operational art exists somewhere there in terms of war itself.

The Soviets, in summarizing the experience of the past, note that for centuries the encounter and the battle were the only forms of naval warfare. As the means of "armed combat" expanded, they note that "it was no longer possible for one engagement or battle to smash the opposing enemy groupings and achieve the objective of the war."<sup>2</sup> One Soviet authority claims that the naval operation began taking definite shape during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05).<sup>3</sup> In looking for Soviet naval operational art in terms of the ideal war fighting example, we should probably cast the net to include the period from that conflict to the Great Fatherland War. At this point we run into the question of the soundness of applying anything out of the past to the present. Given the fundamental, time-independent regularities associated with human interaction, for example, in armed warfare, we can probably get closer to an understanding of Soviet naval

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<sup>2</sup>Admiral V. Sysoyev, Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor, "The Development of Forms of Naval Warfare," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 11, 1980, pp, 24, 25.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



operational art by analyzing a Soviet Russian example of it. This should be particularly true if the Soviets volunteer the information that they managed a given operation right and indeed had matured into expertise in the art.

The Soviets volunteer the information that they had elaborated naval operational art in "the prewar years" in Workers' and Peasants' Red Army Naval Forces Field Manual (BUMS-37) into a unified set of tactical and operational views that had a positive effect on the correct employment of naval forces at the opening of the Great Patriotic War.<sup>4</sup> As an interesting insight into their current mentality, they claim that they had a system of operational readiness worked out that resulted in the timely transition of fleet forces to full battle readiness that resulted in no ship losses on the first day of the German offensive. Since strategic circumstance dictated that the Luftwaffe would be the only German service with the capability to attack Soviet naval targets initially, and the only naval target attacked by it was the port facilities area of Sevastopol, the operational readiness remains open to interpretation.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, we see the Soviets claiming that as early as 1941 they had effected a "system of operational readiness conditions"

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<sup>4</sup>Ammon, "Naval Operational Art," Morskoy Sbornik, 2, 1982, p. 22

<sup>5</sup>See the authoritative German target list in, Russel H.S. Stolfi, Lonnie O. Ratley, III, and John F. O'Neil, Jr., German Disruption of Soviet Command, Control, and Communications (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1983), pp. 190, 193, 201-205.

that "was a new and characteristic feature of the naval art of the Soviet Navy."<sup>6</sup> We see the Soviets claiming effectively theorized and practiced operational art according to a principle that remains close to the top of any Soviet list of principles of military or operational art today. The Soviets also give a concrete illustration of the success of one principle of the art from the first day of the War.

We can probably relax, therefore, and search for a war fighting example of a naval operation from the Great Patriotic War that can seriously further knowledge of Soviet naval operational art. We can also assign the most important test as one that the Soviets themselves say they conducted the operation right. For reasons of strategic geography, the path to the grandfather of modern Soviet naval operations leads to the Black Sea and immediately into challenges in understanding Soviet naval operational art today. By the standards of the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, the Black Sea is a body of water of modest dimensions almost entirely enclosed by land. If the Atlantic can be described as a "blue water" area, the Black Sea would best be described as "gray water" on which any navy would find it difficult to escape the tutelage of a great continental army operating along the adjacent coast. Two questions arise: can we understand naval operational art under so constrained circumstances? and, can we understand Soviet naval operational art as

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<sup>6</sup>Ammon, "Naval Operational Art," Morskoy Sbornik, 2, 1983, p. 23.

it has expanded its horizons to the present day? The answer to both questions is, probably yes. Particularly as concerns the Soviets, they probably continue to be overwhelmed by the immediacy of the great land fronts in Central Europe and along parts of the Chinese border. With so different a defense mentality, the Soviets could well be imagined to envision Western Europe as a Ukraine and the area centered in the waters between Norway and Greenland as a Black Sea.

The Soviets recount that the fleets and flotillas in the Black Sea employed methods of accomplishing their missions that enriched the theory and practice of naval operational art. The Soviets make it clear that the war fighting situation was dominated by "conditions where the enemy had the strategic initiative and his troops were advancing into the depths of [the] country." Under these conditions, the Soviet navy concentrated all efforts on assisting the ground troops in maritime sectors and more specifically supporting them in the defense of naval bases and coastal territories against ground attack. The fleets and flotillas were operationally subordinated to the ground commanders of maritime fronts and independent armies. The Soviets did this to ensure the more effective employment of the navy in the interests of the ground troops and to assure more flexible control over them.<sup>7</sup> They established "Defense Areas" around Odessa and Sevastopol in 1941 in which they subordinated

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<sup>7</sup>Ammon, "Naval Operational Art," Morskoy Sbornik, 2, 1983, p. 24



defending ground troops, naval forces, aviation, and means of support to a single centralized command authority. The Soviets claim that these Defense Areas fully justified themselves and became a new characteristic feature of naval operational art.

As the Germans missed their immediate opportunity to seize Moscow in August 1941, the Soviets began the recovery that would place them on the winning side in the Second World War, albeit almost four years later. With Moscow still in its hands, the Headquarters, Supreme High Command (Stavka, VGK), in October 1941, established a Unified Command of Crimean Forces with the 51st Separate Army, Maritime Army, and all units on the Crimean Peninsula subordinate to it, and with the Black Sea Fleet operationally under its control. Surprisingly, the Soviets (Stavka itself) placed Vice Admiral G. Levchenko in command of the force. They quickly assumed their Soviet identity by establishing Levchenko's staff on the basis of personnel of the 51st Separate Army without a navy department on the staff. The Soviets were on the verge of getting the command relationship right as early as October 1941, but with confusion still apparent.

In accordance with their thinking on fighting in maritime areas, they worked out "the best form of organizing strategic command of naval forces in joint actions with the troops" in April 1942.<sup>8</sup> Stavka, VGK, in that month established High

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<sup>8</sup>Rear Admiral V. Yasenovenko and Captain 1st Rank V. Koryavkov, "Some Questions of Command and Control of Army and Navy Forces in Joint Actions," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 5, 1986, p.



Command, North Caucasus Sector, and specified a strategic grouping including the Crimean Front, Sevastopol Defense Area, North Caucasus Military District, Black Sea Fleet, and Azov Flotilla. The Soviets placed a naval element of over 25 personnel on the staff of the North Caucasus strategic grouping. The naval element successfully coordinated the actions of the naval forces within the great maritime front with the powerful Soviet ground forces in the Crimea and North Caucasus in 1942. Renamed North Caucasus Front in May 1942, the forces noted above continued to be organized under the successful formula of army front headquarters with a strong naval staff element.

During the period June 1941 -- November 1942, the Soviets remained largely on the strategic defensive. As a result, the navy conducted the most important naval operations "on the seaward flanks of Soviet ground forces in the course of defensive operations under very difficult conditions."<sup>9</sup> The Soviets note that the largest landing action on an operational scale in the first phase of the war was the Kerch-Feodosiya Landing Operation (26 December 1941 -- 2 January 1942) in the Crimean area.<sup>10</sup> With typical frenetic Soviet energy, the Unified Command of the Crimea

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<sup>9</sup>Captain 1st Rank Ye. Dvoryanov, "Some Tendencies in the Development of Control of Naval Troops and Forces in Amphibious Landings," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 1, 1981, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup>According to, Captain 1st Rank (Reserve) V. Vorob'yev, "Landing Operations of the Black Sea Fleet in the Great Patriotic War (Questions of Planning and Preparation)," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 3, 1985, pp. 29, 30.

massed troops of the 44th and 51st Armies totalling 42,000 men and elements of the Soviet navy including 77 warships including two cruisers, six destroyers, six gunboats and over 180 auxiliary vessels, transports, and other floating equipment. Army Lieutenant General D. Kozlov, commander of the Caucasus Front, provided general direction while navy Vice Admiral F. Oktyabr'skiy, commander of the Black Sea Fleet directed the naval forces. For the operation, the Soviets subordinated the entire Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Flotilla to the army front commander who threw virtually all of the naval forces of the Black Sea into the amphibious landing.

The Soviets landed an impressively large number of troops in the operation and showed extraordinary strategic aggressiveness in holding out this potential defensive reserve and using it to launch a major counteroffensive from the sea. The Soviets timed the operation well because the Germans had begun a major offensive on 17 December 1941 against Sevastopol with the strategic goal of seizing the great Soviet naval base there and securing the southern flank of their forces in the Ukraine. The commander of the attacking German 11th Army had determined to take great risks in concentrating his forces against Sevastopol and had left only a single German infantry division and weak Rumanian forces to defend the eastern part of the peninsula where the Soviets planned to execute their landing.<sup>11</sup> Thanks to their

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<sup>11</sup>See the German version in U.S. Army War College, Art of War Colloquium, Large Unit Operations Service, Selected German Army Operations on the Eastern Front, Vol. VIIA, Field Army

own strategic aggressiveness and the favorable chance that the Germans had stripped their eastern defense to a minimum, the Soviets faced prospects of carrying out a naval amphibious landing operation that would achieve major strategic goals -- at the least the seizure of the Kerch peninsula and the halting of the German attack on Sevastopol, and at the most, the collapse of the German position in the Crimea.

In their postwar analyses of their most important naval operation of the first phase of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviets emphasize that they successfully combined the three most important principles of operational art, namely: deception, surprise, and massing of forces along the main axis. The latter principle is tricky in its application to the naval operations conducted in the open sea or ocean but easy to discern in an amphibious operation. The Soviets massed the bulk of the otherwise widely distributed forces at Feodosiya in position to cut off the German forces on the Kerch Peninsula and to drive toward Sevastopol. In a real lesson of Soviet operational mentality, the Soviets made 12 separate sea and airborne landings far to the east around Kerch on 26 December 1941. The Soviets intended to deceive the Germans as concerns the main axis of the attack scheduled to unfold at Feodosiya three days later and approximately 65 road miles to the east. The Soviets also landed strong enough forces to pin down and attempt to destroy the

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Operations (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 1983), pp. 161-175, and also Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories (Chicago: Regnery, 1958), pp. 222-227.



German infantry division deployed north and south of the city of Kerch. If operational art can be defined as stringing together tactical actions into a greater simple operation as defined by its mission to achieve a clear strategic goal, the Soviets orchestrated a unique deceptive feint around Kerch with strong forces of the 51st Army (13,000 men). The feint was unique because the Soviets made it strong enough to become a secondary axis of the operation after the landing along the main axis at Fevdosiya by stronger forces of the 44th Army (23,000 men) on 29 December 1941.

The Soviet landing at Feodosiya precipitated an immediate German withdrawal from Kerch and the entire peninsula to the west of it. The local German commander, already engaged with strong Soviet forces from 26-28 December 1941 around Kerch, and faced with a Soviet landing 65 miles to his rear, simply disengaged the German infantry divisions under his command and immediately moved out of the Kerch Peninsula. To retrieve the situation around Feodosiya, with or without the precipitous although decisive withdrawal from Kerch, the overall German commander was forced to halt the attack against Sevastopol. The Soviets are quite accurate in their claim that "the Kerch-Feodosiya operation, the first large joint offensive operation of land forces and the fleet, resulted in the liberation of the Kerch Peninsula [and]



made it possible to repulse the second assault against Sevastopol."<sup>12</sup>

We can learn a lot about Soviet naval operational art by using the Kerch-Feodosiya operation as an historical model of a successful Soviet naval operation. First of all, the Soviets were engaged in a real war on the strategic defensive in a different situation against first class western opposition. Several useful points can be made here for purposes of reinforcing the value of this case. The Soviets were not fighting against technically backward, demoralized, strategically surprised Japanese forces (1945), or tough, tactically superior, but strategically finished and outnumbered German forces (1944-45). In a word, the Soviets could not lose against the Germans in 1944-45 or the Japanese in 1945 with the lesser stress and different mentality suggested by such a situation. The Soviets faced a real possibility of bloody tactical defeat and operational disaster resulting in failure to achieve the strategic goal of holding on to Sevastopol and opening another front in the Crimea. They faced the possibility of grand, possibly campaign-turning defeat in the south. Interestingly, the Soviets today in the hypothesized case of a strategic offensive in Central Europe, face a similar degree of challenge and parallel quality of stress. Notwithstanding the Soviet penchant for working out adequate correlations of force, the

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<sup>12</sup>See, for example, Vorob'yev, "Landing Operations, Great Patriotic War," Morskoy Sbornik, 3, 1985, p. 31.

Soviets would be faced with the real possibility of setbacks in any conventional offensive against intact western forces in Europe and resultant failure to achieve the strategic goals inspiring the war. This fundamental similarity in the two situations -- the real possibility of losing -- suggests that the Soviets would emphasize the style and principles of operational art dictated by the Kerch-Feodosiya situation.

Uncertain of victory and therefore doubly afraid of defeat, the Soviets nevertheless showed decisiveness in the choice of strategic goals. They matched forces and means with the strategic missions assigned to elements of the 44th and 51st Armies to achieve the strategic goals. In their own words, the Soviets applied the following principles effectively in the practice of operational art in the Kerch-Fevdosiya landing:

1. Principle of surprise achieved in landings both on 6 and 29 December 1941. Of the six methods delineated by Soviet authorities to achieve surprise, the Soviets exerted:
  - a. Deception through a unique combined feint and secondary axis.
  - b. Concealment of preparations.
  - c. Secrecy of intentions.
  - d. Choice of time and axis of secondary and main attacks.
2. Principle of massing (S. Gorshov) or concentration (V.Ye. Savkin) exerted in the concentration of force at Feodosiya.

3. Principle of maneuver exerted in time and location of the main and secondary axes of landing.

The Soviets give the landings highest marks for a naval operation in support of the Army. The Great Patriotic War would be won or lost by the Soviet Army and the best the navy could do would be to support it on its maritime, enclosed sea flanks. The Stavka, V GK, enforced a unified military strategy on the armed forces that focused the navy operation on support of the army during the entire war. While on the strategic defensive, the navy practiced the operational art of stringing together tactical combat actions in discrete time and place to achieve strategic goals. Later in the war, the army went over largely to the strategic offense in the year 1943 and completely during 1944-45. During the latter time, the army operated in grand offensives similar to those postulated by NATO authorities in the event of a Soviet strategic offensive in Europe today. During the same time, under the very different circumstances of offensive operations, the Soviet navy continued to enrich Soviet naval operational art with examples of circumscribed operations demanded by the exigencies of a great continental land war. We could make a good case today for Soviet naval landing operations against Northern and Central Norway that would be similar in spirit and style to those at Kerch and Feodosiya.

Perhaps we could even generalize that the Soviet naval operation today would be that of Kerch and Fevdosiya, not so much because it would be an amphibious operation conducted at a minute

distance from Soviet naval bases, but because it would be an operation linked to a central unified strategy that would demand naval operations in support of the advance of ground armies, the defense of areas in which the army would remain on the defensive, and the air defense of the strategic rear. Based on the example of Kerch and Feodosiya and without the additives of precision guided missiles technically and reconnaissance-strike imperatives tactically, we see Soviet naval operational art dominated by the principles of surprise and concentration and the supporting method of deception.

In summary of examining a dominating Soviet naval operation of World War II the following equations suggest themselves:

Time: 1942-1943

Time: Today

The Black Sea

The Norwegian Sea

is to

is to

The Crimea as  
(Kerch-Feodosiya)

Scandinavia  
(N. Norwegian coast)

is to

is to

The Ukraine

Central Europe

Putting together Kerch-Feodosiya as distilled essence of Soviet naval operational art in World War II and adding to it the ongoing conventional revolution in precision guided munitions and automated reconnaissance-strike tactics, we get a surprisingly coherent picture. The Soviets consistently return to the "principle-themes" in naval and military operational art of surprise, concentrating (or, massing of forces and fires) associated principle of correlation of force, and the method of



, deception in their analyses of military operations in World War II. In considering the revolution in accuracy and range of weapons today, the Soviets hammer on the themes of surprise, massing of fires, and the method of deception in startlingly similar degree, claiming that the opening of mass, surprise fires first, leads automatically to victory.



### CHAPTER THREE

#### SOVIET NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART: WHAT THE SOVIETS SAY ABOUT IT

No less an authority than Admiral of the Soviet Fleet, S.G. Gorshkov, recent commander in chief of the Soviet navy, presents the view that at the turn of the century by approximately 1910, naval art produced a new form of fleet combat activity -- the naval operation -- which created the need for appropriate measures for its support: operational reconnaissance, cover and deception, the defense of major surface naval vessels during transit and in combat against submarines, etc.<sup>1</sup> With the appearance of the modern naval operation, Gorshkov and other Soviet naval authorities note a logical progression where their country generally had developed the naval art theoretically before the Great Fatherland War. The general art also included naval operational art which is succinctly described as,

...the theory and practice of preparing and conducting all-fleet, landing, and antilanding operations; employment of naval forces in combined-arms operations together with other branches of the Armed Forces, and in independent operations.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviets claim that they had developed the content of the naval operation as the aggregate of battles, actions, strikes, and maneuvers of mixed forces coordinated and interrelated by

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<sup>1</sup>ONI, SME, Naval, I, January 83, entry: Naval Art [signed, S.G. Gorshkov].

<sup>2</sup>See in, Ammon, "Naval Operational ART," Morskoy Sbornik, 2, 1985, p. 22.

objectives, missions, place, and time and conducted under a single concept and plan. They indicate that they had developed naval operational art by 1941 with sufficient completeness to survive the great German surprise attack of the summer of that year.

In discussing modern war, the naval operation, and naval operational art, the Soviets often present their ideas obliquely in terms such as the principles of operational art, historical cases of naval combat particularly from the Second World War to include both Soviet and western examples, and commentary on current trends in both technology and tactical thought. The Soviet Union is controlled by a single political party that claims to be operating under a scientific world historical outlook superior to any other. The centralized and intensively organized Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) has unified political and military thinking at the highest level and demanded conformance with the alleged scientific approach. Theorizing about military and naval art, as a result, is encouraged as a means for maintaining political control and as a way to keep the scientific rigor in military art, doctrine, and science. The Soviets emphasize theory and associated principle in their military writings about military and naval operational art. We can learn a lot about Soviet naval operational art by studying the unified principles associated with it and discussed so prolifically by Soviet writers.



The Soviets think in terms of scientifically deduced general regulating principles of military operational art that apply fundamentally also to naval operational art. The principles that the Soviets subscribe to are similar to the principles of war taught, for example, to officers in the armed forces of the United States, United Kingdom, and France. The long Soviet list of principles of military art -- (1) readiness, (2) surprise, (3) assets (use all), (4) coordination, (5) concentration (on main axis), (6) full depth (defeat of enemy to), (7) political-military factors (calculation of), (8) control (continuous troop), (9) energy (resolving of ongoing problems), (10) rear organization (for continuous support), and (11) reserves (timely restoration of)<sup>3</sup> -- include most of the principles of war considered as valid in the west. The Soviet principles of military operational art are described in terms similar to those above but generally listed as fewer in number, for example, (1) mobility (tempo of combat), (2) concentration (on main axis), (3) surprise, (4) energy (combat activeness), (5) reserves (or preservation of combat effectiveness), (6) conformity of goals with means, and (7) coordination.<sup>4</sup> The Soviet principles of naval operational art, given the centralized unification of Soviet military thought, include the same principles noted above. The naval principles will be accentuated or attenuated

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<sup>3</sup>Colonel V.Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Soviet Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View) (Moscow, 1972) (Translated by U.S. Air Force), p.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

in importance compared with the more general military principles because of the unique sea and oceanic operating conditions or "terrain" of the naval operation.

Surprise is in many ways the supreme principle of Soviet naval operational art. The Soviets labor today under the adverse psychological impact of the surprise attack of the Germans in 1941. The Soviets failed to exert the principle of readiness, allowed the Germans to surprise them, and fell into chaos through associated failure in coordination, control, and concentration of effort. Within the almost incredibly short period of two weeks, the Germans could claim with ample supporting evidence that they had defeated the Soviet Union. Only the highest level redirection of the German main axis away from Moscow and into the Ukraine -- i.e., an error of Adolf Hitler personally at the highest level of German military strategy -- saved the Soviets in the summer of 1941. To this formidable historical baggage the Soviets have been forced to add the special importance of surprise in any exchange of nuclear weapons because of their long ranges, accuracy, massive destructive effects, and short times of flight. And, finally, the Soviets face today a revolutionary increase in the importance of surprise in conventional warfare with the advent of long range precision guided munitions and automated launching of massed strikes upon initial reconnaissance contact.

In recent studies on surprise and the success of combat actions at sea, the Soviets have made revealing comments about

surprise in naval warfare by describing historical lessons for present day application from a Russian Soviet mentality. After analyzing surprise attacks by "capitalist" naval forces in recent history as a foil to theorize about the Soviet naval operation and naval operational art, one authority notes that "methods by which an aggressor achieved surprise were quite varied [but] produced the greatest effect when they were employed all together under a unified plan."<sup>5</sup> Although the historical cases are somewhat strained, the Soviet authority is warning a Soviet audience about the western propensity toward surprise attack and the manifest dangers from it. The Soviets evidently believe that surprise is best, most scientifically, and systematically achieved by being an integral part of a highly centralized, "unified plan." History is exploited to support this thesis and warn the reader of the necessity for effective naval warfare to be conducted under a unified plan which must provide for and attempt to achieve surprise.

Given the special importance of surprise to the Soviets, they have developed a systematic list of "methods" for achieving it. The Soviets define surprise as "actions unexpected by the enemy which enhance the achievement of success in combat, in an operation, and in war."<sup>6</sup> They continue on to elaborate that,

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<sup>5</sup>Captain 1st Rank A. Aristov, "Surprise Factor Effect on the Success of Combat Actions at Sea," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 1, 1985, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>6</sup>See in, ONI, SME, Naval, I, January 83, entry: Surprise [signed Yu. V. Chuyev].



...surprise is one of the major principles of military art and consists of choosing the time, procedure, and modes of combat operations which make it possible to strike when the enemy is least prepared to ward off a strike and thereby paralyze his will to organize resistance.<sup>7</sup>

To accomplish this paralysis that the Soviets feel is so important, they have developed a unique operational subculture of methods that include the peculiarly Russian factor of maskirovka -- masking or obscuring of their intentions. Maskirovka and the other methods are not ends in themselves but allow the Soviets to mass fires unexpectedly against the strongest enemy naval targets along the most weakly defended axis of attack.

In one authoritative Soviet encyclopedic description of maskirovka that has been translated into English, the U.S. linguist suggests the words camouflage, deception, and masking as meanings for the Russian term. In the translated document, the Soviets describe maskirovka (i.e., roughly deception) as the "aggregate of measures to deceive the adversary regarding the presence and disposition of...forces...targets, their status and condition, combat readiness and actions, and their command authority plan."<sup>8</sup> Maskirovka is also designated a category of operational and tactical support. The Soviets additionally distinguish operational camouflage, concealment, and deception (operativnaya maskirovka) as being

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Soviet Union, MED, V, 1986, p. 1774.



...accomplished by means of carrying out feints and decoy (diversionary) actions, simulating concentrations and deployment of [forces and resources], deception, and dissemination of false information on the state of one's own troops and the character of forthcoming actions during preparations for and conduct of operations.<sup>9</sup>

Maskirovka is planned and organized by front, military district, and fleet headquarters on the basis of an operation plan.

The Soviet naval writer, Captain A. Aristov, lists the methods of achieving surprise as the following. The list illustrates the Soviet penchant for system, pedantry, and formalism in being scientific about war.

#### Methods of Achieving Surprise

1. Deception of the Enemy
  - A. Strategic Misinformation
  - B. Operational Camouflage
  - C. Feints
2. Simulation of Force Actions and Various Friendly Targets
3. Concealment of Preparations for Combat
4. Employment of New Weapons and Methods of Conducting Combat Unknown to the Enemy
5. Choice of Time and Axis for Main Attack
6. Speed of Maneuver and Decisiveness of Force Actions

The list is well considered and systematically derived and shows the Soviets as being in deadly earnest about naval operational art. The Soviets consider deception as an "integral" part of any naval operation and one of the most

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

important methods for the attainment of surprise. They consider surprise in turn as the most important principle for application in the Soviet naval operation along with concentration of forces (army) or massing of fires (navy) along the main axis of an attack.

As evidenced by the special methods used by the Soviets to effect surprise, western naval forces can safely expect to be deceived and should be prepared to react to surprise achieved in some degree by Soviet naval forces conducting a naval operation against them. The English word, deception, noted above to describe an important, integral part of any Soviet naval operation, is close but not completely adequate for conveying the meaning of the words used in Russian. The English word, deception, is used to give the meaning of the Russian, maskirovka, and more loosely, hedrost. The Russian meaning for maskirovka, however, is concealment, cover, camouflage, or hiding, meanings that gravitate mostly toward hiding or masking. The Russian meaning for hedrost is cunning or trickery and as applied as a method for achieving surprise, gravitates towards confusing an opponent -- the enemy sees what is going on but he does not understand it.<sup>10</sup> Under the English heading, deception, the Soviets will be doing a variety of Russian things including practicing cunning and effecting naval camouflage. The Soviets

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<sup>10</sup>This brief "analysis" based on discussion with Assistant Professor, Dr. Mikhail Tsypkin, Naval Postgraduate School. Professor Tsypkin is a native Russian speaker from the Moscow area who served on active duty for approximately one year as a reserve officer in the Soviet army.

probably conceptualize that military cunning makes the commander of military forces successful in deception while deception in turn makes it most possible for him to achieve surprise.

In the area of joint operations with the army and especially in amphibious landing operations, the Soviets dwell on the importance of surprise equally as much as in independent operations in oceanic TVDs (TSMAs). The Soviets invariably link surprise with concentration of effort along the main axis of attack (army, army-navy landing) or the naval version of massing strikes against the strongest enemy target. The Soviets maintain that since the factor of surprise exists over a comparatively short period of time, careful application of operational art is required to convert potential opportunities into real success. They note the time-honored factor in the west that "during the disembarkation of the first wave, the main body of troops is almost incapacitated, and the landing force lacks maneuverability in the early stages [ashore]."<sup>11</sup> They maintain that analysis of past wars shows the advantages of surprise with its effect of stunning an enemy and establishing an overwhelming concentration of force and winning correlation of force. To achieve surprise in an amphibious operation, the Soviets say means primarily to conceal from the enemy the purpose and concept of planned military [tactical] actions, the

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<sup>11</sup>Captain 1st Rank (Retired) K. Penzin, Doctor of Naval Sciences, Professor, Honored Scientist of the RSFSR, "Surprise in Amphibious Landing Operations and Measures to Achieve It (from the combat experience of foreign fleets)," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 4, 1980, p. 12.



scope, means, and methods by which they will be conducted and supported, and the place and time of the troop landing. Whether it be the controlling or supporting service in an amphibious landing, the Soviet navy will practice operational art by exerting the principles of concentration (massing) and surprise and the method of deception.

Probably the most important principle of Soviet military operational art and one somewhat more important even than surprise to the Soviets is, in English parlance, concentration of effort. In describing the principle that we refer to as concentration, the Soviets use the words,

massing of forces and resources, the concentration in main and decisive sectors (action areas) of forces and resources or their fire (strikes) for ensuring the rout of the enemy and the achievement of the goal of the operation (engagement).<sup>12</sup>

In land warfare, it must be evident that military operational art consists of ensuring the concentration of forces and resources along the ground of the main axis of advance. In warfare at sea in independent or newly emerging Soviet combined fleet operations in oceanic TVDs (TSMAs), the Soviets must exert this principle through the massing of fires and strikes from naval forces that may be either concentrated or dispersed. This interpretation of Soviet naval concentration of effort is demanded by the unique geographical terrain in which the naval operation takes place. In an oceanic TVD (TSMA), Soviet naval forces are not constrained to seize and hold ocean space or

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<sup>12</sup>ONI, SME, Naval, III, September 85, entry: Massing of Forces and Resources.



forced to advance according to the dictates of mountain, swamp, urban area, etc. The Soviet naval operation will be strike oriented and Soviet naval operational art will systematically and predictably execute the operation with stiff emphasis on a winning correlation of strike weapons.

In joint operations with the army, for example, amphibious landings in a maritime-style TVD (TSMA), the navy would exert operational art more conventionally. Whether or not the navy were the controlling service in the operation, it would be forced to concentrate forces, means, and fires on the land area of the bridgehead and the sea approaches to it. The Soviets note, for example, that during the Second World War, navies massed forces and resources -- the naval force, the landing troops, and aircraft -- on the main landing sectors. With inimitable consistency, the Soviets continue on to say that "in doing so, a decisive superiority of forces and resources was often created."<sup>13</sup> Obliquely, the Soviets tell us here that Soviet naval operational art concentrates forces, resources, and fires in amphibious landing operations and does so within a set of rules that demands the establishment of winning correlations of force.

The Soviets succinctly comment on this business of massing in the open sea by arguing that in operations aimed at annihilating naval forces and disrupting sea lanes, the massing of forces is achieved by concentrating the efforts of both

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

homogeneous and heterogeneous naval forces against the more important enemy ship groupings and convoys. Operating out of various sectors, they deliver simultaneous and successive strikes at the enemy until he is completely routed. The Soviets reveal a peculiarity in their way of thinking with the words homogeneous and heterogeneous naval forces. Soviet naval operational art dictates the massing of strikes against the strongest enemy targets but so do naval tactics in the west. The Soviets send a signal on their mentality both in terms of the emphasis on system and a lingering lack of confidence in handling naval forces. The signal is that to be systematic in naval operational art, you must differentiate between homogeneous (e.g., all-submarine, all-naval long range aviation, etc.) forces and heterogeneous forces able to engage in combat.

Recently in 1986, a Soviet naval authority brought together in a brief article the regularities of modern naval operations. Written against the background of increased emphasis on conventional warfare and the "new stage of the scientific-technical revolution," the article summarizes the regularities, content, and characteristic features of the modern naval operation. In it, the Soviets emphasize that the regularities of conducting combat actions at sea are dictated by general laws of warfare and by the unique features of the conduct of combat at sea. Regularities are described as similar to laws but with multiple meanings and more flexible application, for example, they can reflect necessary relationships among phenomena without

indicating a particular law.<sup>14</sup> The Soviets elaborate that regularities of the modern naval operation are based on a group of laws of war that start to act at the beginning of a war and which dictate the course and outcome of combat actions. In a weighty commentary on the Soviet style in war, the Soviet authority, who can be taken as speaking for the navy, i.e., "the Soviets," states that the laws of war and associated regularities or principles of naval operational art "essentially are aspects (components) of a more general law -- the determining role of the correlation of the belligerents' material and spiritual forces."<sup>15</sup> This statement by the first deputy chief of the Main Navy Staff supports the important interpretation that the Soviets believe the most important regularity (or principle) of naval operational art is the massing of strikes against the main strength of the naval opponent along a main axis of attack.

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<sup>14</sup>See in, Admiral P. Navoytsev, First Deputy Chief of Main Navy Staff, "Regularities, Content, and Characteristic Features of Modern Naval Operations," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 7, 1986, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### COMPARING AND CONTRASTING SOVIET MILITARY AND NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART

The Soviets have written a great deal about ground forces operational art both in extolling and explaining their success in the Great Fatherland War and in claiming the superiority of the Marxist-Leninist scientific dialectic of world historical development. The Germans conducted effective military operations at the grand tactical, i.e., operational, level in the First and Second World Wars that influenced both the Soviets and the west. Over the past 20 years, the U.S. Army has begun to emphasize conducting warfare systematically at the operational level based on the special success of the Germans at the tactical and operational levels in recent war and the formidable attributes of the Soviet ground forces which have espoused operational art and trumpeted its virtues. Soviet military and army operational art have become well known particularly with the U.S. Army emphasis on a more systematic approach to war at the operational level. In sharp contrast to this situation of familiarity, military officers and civilian analysts in the west are less conversant with Soviet naval operational art -- the U.S. Navy does not espouse or practice it and the U.S. Army must tread on uncertain ground in examining naval operational art because of the grand question of the "uniqueness" of naval warfare.

Several extremely important questions are susceptible to analysis in this situation. The U.S. Army is comfortably familiar with Soviet military operational art but also needs every bit of knowledge and every possible technique to deepen its understanding. Because of the centralization and unification of Soviet military thought, the Soviets have synchronized naval operational art under the general principles of military art and military operational art. Soviet naval operational art, therefore, will be governed by general principles identical with those of army operational art allowing western analysts to apply understanding of one to the other. Relatively well but still incompletely understood Soviet ground operational art can be applied with due respect to unique features of naval warfare to an understanding of what Soviet naval operational art must be. Largely unexplored by U.S. naval analysts, Soviet naval operational art presently cannot be used to: (1) further an understanding of Soviet ground forces operational art, and (2) add to our understanding of the Soviet mentality in preparing and fighting war. To apply naval operational art to the better understanding of ground forces operational art, we must ask the questions: what are the content and characteristic features of the Soviet naval operation? What are the unique characteristics of the naval war fighting environment? Among identically defined principles of military and naval operational art, what is the different emphasis that must be placed on each of the naval principles?

In discussing the content of the naval operation, the first deputy chief of the Main Navy Staff claims that the following definition provides the fullest definition of a naval operation as a form of military actions: the aggregate of simultaneous and successive engagements, actions, and strikes conducted by naval forces, coordinated and interrelated by objective, mission, place and time for the purpose of repelling an aggressor in ocean and sea theaters of military actions, often to accomplish operational-strategic or operational missions in coordination with other branches of the armed forces. In the content of the "operation at sea," the Soviets include Soviet objectives and missions, enemy targets of action, composition of friendly forces, factors of support, command and control, and the geographic (ocean, sea, coastal) factors. Similar descriptions of the Soviet naval operation have been equated in different context in other parts of this study and the content of the operation is recognizable to most army and navy officers as the headings for the important parts of any plan for a western combat operation.

Within the above nicely systematic framework, one Soviet naval authority makes several points which characterize Soviet thinking about war at sea. He notes that "in contrast to equipment of other branches of the Armed Forces, losses in modern submarines and surface combatants are essentially irreplaceable in the course of a war."<sup>1</sup> He then argues that this consideration

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 21.



. of irreplaceable loss within the time of the naval operation results in special measures required to keep naval forces tracking towards the strategic goals of the operation. We see here a coherent explanation for the unique Soviet emphasis on "survival" (i.e., operational survival) in naval warfare, the peculiar Soviet emphasis on the obvious necessity to continue in the fight after the main strike.

Admiral Navoytsev gives more insight into the Soviet naval operational mentality by emphasizing "the first strike" as the most powerful, massive, and comprehensively supported and using the term: combat actions on the main axis. These things are well known from other avenues of approach, but he continues on to make an extraordinarily valuable observation that formations of the ground forces carry out a deployment or redeployment on friendly territory under cover of a constantly operating defense system, but naval forces carry out deployments across zones of possible enemy action. Here is a unique factor in naval operations compared with ground that will be a difference in the applicability of the principles of operational art.

In describing typical characteristics of operations at sea, the Soviets give us a chance to gauge the unique features and environment from their perspective. Most of the characteristics that the Soviets describe are typical in similar degree to ground operations, for example:



### Typical Characteristics of Operations at Sea

1. Decisiveness
2. Spatial Scope (great)
3. Dynamic Nature (very)
4. Mixed and Combined Forces
5. Massed Employment (of Forces, Means)
6. Electronic Warfare (Wide Use)
7. Complex Coordination.

Among these characteristics, at least three stand out as being potentially so exaggerated in naval warfare and in the naval operation that they take on the quality of being unique. Those characteristics are decisiveness, spatial scope, and electronic warfare. Although army operations are "decisive," navy operations are exaggeratedly so. At Jutland (31 May-1 June 1916), for example, the opposing naval forces engaged in gun duels intermittently for a total period of approximately one hour of actual firing in six hours of maneuvering in tactical proximity each to the other. During that brief gun firing, the two sides lost approximately 10,000 men killed in action. The concentration of naval forces in a relatively small number of relatively small but valuable and densely populated maneuver elements commonly results in astounding combat results in brief time periods. Precision guided munitions with long ranges and large warheads would tend to accentuate the characteristics of decisiveness in naval operations. Similarly, the characteristics

, of spatial scope and electronic warfare are exaggerated to the point of uniqueness compared with ground operations.

In vigorous discussion in the early 1980s, the Soviets debated the special nature of naval warfare and noted eight features inherent in naval warfare.<sup>2</sup> Every one of these features can be seen to be either unique to naval operations or untowardly important in them. The Soviets state that, (1) offensive naval actions at sea do not attempt to seize ground except, of course, in amphibious and other similar joint operations. It is difficult to fault the Soviets here; they have hit upon a unique feature of the naval operation. Their discovery is important for us in attempting to relate ground and naval operational art and to increase the understanding of the ground art by fitting together missing pieces of the puzzle. The question is: how does this unique feature of the naval operation bend naval operational art into a different shape from that of the army? An answer would be that Soviet naval operational art is more decisive in the way it exerts the principle of massing forces, means, and fires along the main axis of the attack. The Soviet navy does not seize surface ocean water, it concentrates on massing accurate, long range fires against the strongest enemy naval targets. It operates independently of the concept of an axis of advance determined in advance and bound in direction and location by the logic of ground terrain. In addition, naval

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Vice Admiral K. Stalbo, "Some Issues of the Theory of the Development and Employment of the Navy," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 4, 1981, pp.

operational art concentrates the massed strikes of the naval operation against the strongest enemy weapons platforms and appropriate supporting targets. The naval targets will be uniquely dense, relatively small in numbers, and subject to the unique catastrophic destruction of naval warfare -- being sunk.

Closely associated with the above factor, the Soviets note that (2) in naval warfare objectives are achieved by attack against the strongest targets. The situation in naval warfare is a sharply etched one in which a few powerful naval targets capable of dangerous strikes against friendly naval and ground targets must be destroyed immediately upon detection. To attacking Soviet ground forces no such threat exists from the defending enemy army group to the Soviet front or associated hinterland. The pivotal Soviet military principle of concentration along the main axis gets decisively changed here. In ground warfare, over and above the establishment of an adequate correlation of forces in the TVD (TSMA), the Soviets will practice concentrating their strongest forces against the weakest possible defenders along terrain axes also selected to lead to the envelopment and surrounding of the stronger enemy forces. In naval warfare, the opposing forces, particularly the stronger one, will launch massed strikes directly against the strongest targets along the axis of strike least well defended. These are heavy differences between the naval and ground operation. They also show army operational art as less decisive in its cast than naval. We might generalize that given the



. tactically "permissive" nature of oceanic terrain over and above the technical side effects of sinking weapons platforms, the Soviet navy has mastered terrain and passed to a "higher level" of warfare in which immediate direct attack against an enemy is characteristic. Using this to forecast future Soviet ground operational art, we could characterize it as becoming similar to naval.

The Soviets continue on to note that (3) defensive naval actions often do not have the purpose to hold terrain. This situation is in sharp contrast with ground warfare in which defending forces concentrate exclusively on terrain factors, for example, holding specific terrain at all cost, trading specific terrain for time, and slowing an opponent in specific terrain while accepting profligate, possibly fatal, casualties but denying him vital ground. The Soviets describe a situation that is different from any ground situation when a defending naval force is relatively strong and has large ocean space left in which to maneuver against a stronger attacker. An inexorable logic develops though in which the defending naval force is driven back to its own coastal area, associated straits, approaches, narrows, etc., which it defends in a way similar to ground forces. In the open ocean, however, defending naval forces will not be tied to the defense of specific terrain, and the Soviets are largely correct in pointing this out as a factor of uniqueness in the defensive naval operation.



The Soviets claim uniqueness in naval operations in stating that, (4) in naval warfare deployment and redeployment may take weeks and may take place over hostile terrain. They tell us several interesting things about themselves in the claim. We must infer that "weeks" is a long time and excessive compared with the standard we must assume of ground war. We can also infer that the concept of deployment is especially important to them to be broken out separately in such an analysis and that the factor probably represents frustration on the part of the naval service in educating the army on the distances, exposure of plans, and unique dangers inherent in naval deployments. Unlike the Germans, for example, representing a great land power but who took vast deployments in their stride, the Soviets reveal a fussy preoccupation with deployment that becomes magnified in importance in the practice of naval operational art.

Other factors that the Soviets suggest as being unique to naval warfare are not so credible as those above. They list as especially characteristic and unusual the points that (5) fleets employ extraordinarily diverse weapons, and (6) some naval forces are severely constrained by weather. Modern armies, however, employ diverse weapons and are severely constrained by weather in their cross-country mobility and by combinations of weather and terrain almost as paralyzing as wind, wave, and surf in naval amphibious operations.

In pointing out unusual and particularly important features of naval warfare, the Soviets imply uniqueness in (7) the scope

, of naval operations which may easily be global. The surface of the sea is a vast highway for Soviet navy combat and support forces. Naval forces are uniquely flexible in their peacetime ability to loiter and concentrate almost any place in the world touched by salt water. The Soviet navy has developed the surface support forces or trains to support a significant naval presence world-wide and an impressive number of foreign bases. The Soviet navy must still be regarded fundamentally as a sea denial force and the fact of its capability to present itself world-wide in peacetime does not necessarily translate into significant global operations in wartime. The Soviets are quite correct therefore in describing that naval operations may be global, but Soviet naval operations will not necessarily have that feature.

A last factor described by the Soviets as a unique feature of naval operations is (8) combat activity in four terrain media, namely sea surface, undersea, air, and ground. Particularly when we consider amphibious operations, the Soviet navy is uniquely busy and varied in its physical combat environment, Soviet naval operational art can be predicted to have special problems in coordinating forces so varied as undersea, surface, and air over the vast distances associated with the open ocean. Soviet naval operational art will be challenged by the problems of command and control under such circumstances and will show exaggerated concern for coordination in the naval operation.

Ocean and sea dominate the physical media in which naval warfare takes place today. Analysts of modern war have taken in

at a glance the vast difference between sea and land a geographical terrain for combat and almost universally agree that the naval environment is uniquely different from the land. In sharp contrast, much ink continues to be spilled over the perennial issue of whether or not naval warfare is unique. The Soviets take the unequivocal stand that the general principles of Soviet military art apply also to naval and naval operational art. In effect, they maintain that the scientifically derived principles of military art that have centered on the army apply to all the services and are modified only by prudent regard for the physical environment of the combat. In the case of naval warfare, the Soviets have described and debated the question of the unique features of naval warfare. They have made effective arguments in support of several unique features of the naval operation but have not moved toward any claim of uniqueness of the naval operation or naval operational art.

The picture presented by the Soviets is similar in many respects to the picture of differences between ground and naval warfare in the west. Both pictures are classical ones of the presentation of a case that appears to be so obvious that no effort seems necessary to test and criticize. The sea environment is vastly different from the land. So far, so good, but how is it different? The sea is different because it is a heavy fluid which unless disturbed by various well-described forces is perfectly level. Almost three-quarters of the earth's surface, therefore, presents the spectacle of a potential battlefield



devoid of cover, concealment, obstacle, and obstruction. Although the fluid has no solid obstacle on its surface, it represents in and of itself an obstacle to the movement of men on foot or in land vehicles; all men and their land vehicles are too heavy to move across its surface. Men in ships, in contrast, are presented with a great highway for movement worldwide and simultaneously a theater of naval operations larger than any possible land theater. Catastrophe strikes when ships are damaged in war, take in water, and sink. Alternatively, using true submersibles, men can move through the heavy fluid converting it into a unique three-dimensional "heavy space" for the conduct of war from undersea against surface, air, and land targets and opposing submarines. The formidable qualities of the modern submarine suggest the quasi-philosophical commentary that he who controls undersea controls the surface and in turn the land areas of the world.

Using this approach, we see several unique features of war at sea that can be translated into differences between Soviet ground and naval operational art. The following list is a reasonably full one that shows unique technical and terrain features of naval warfare and similarly unique tactical factors derived from them.

#### Naval Terrain Uniqueness

1. Featureless, fluid medium translates into unrestricted mobility for ships operating on its surface and within it.
2. No cover, concealment for surface vessels.



3. Unobstructed distant fields of fire for naval surface vessels.

#### Naval Weapons Platforms and Weapons Uniqueness

1. Surface universe of combat dominated by relatively few compact, high-value surface weapons platforms or targets.
2. Surface ships susceptible to immediate catastrophic kill.
3. Relatively invulnerable submarines hidden in opaque heavy fluid.

#### Tactical Uniqueness

1. Accentuated premium in range and accuracy of naval weapons.
2. Physical camouflage (hiding) of surface ships impossible.
3. Electronic camouflage (hiding) of dense-technology surface ships uniquely emphasized.
3. Ultra-sensitivity of surface ships to detection, targeting, and catastrophic destruction because of range, accuracy, and lethality of weapons that overmatch targets.

The Soviets insist that the principles of military operational art apply to both army and navy operational art. By extension of such thinking, we can see that they have taken the position that common laws of war exist that govern the warfare conducted by the five branches of the Soviet armed forces. The Soviets must be taken to believe that naval warfare is not unique. The Soviets make it clear, however, that the principles of naval operational art which are identical in statement to those of army operational art must be applied with due regard for the real world environment and we have made the analysis that the

, naval environment is indeed uniquely different in particulars affecting war at sea. The questions that remain to be answered are: how does the unique environment of the sea affect the principles of naval operational art? And, how does this effect help us to understand the better-known although identical principles of army operational art?

Taking probably the five most significant principles of naval operational art -- readiness, surprise, coordination, maneuver, and massing -- we can see that the unique naval factors discussed above exaggerate in every case the impact of the principles when they are applied to the naval operation. The valuable equation can be suggested that naval operational art is army operational art with every principle of application exaggerated in importance. Why is this so? The above discussion summarized shows that the naval environment, once mastered by the technology of modern ship and submarine, presents fundamentally greater latitude in the practice of war -- the regulating principles are the same but the frictions are different, less, and war moves at a faster pace on a higher plane.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FORECASTING THE SOVIET NAVAL OPERATION: A CONVENTIONAL WARFARE SCENARIO

A Soviet offensive in Central Europe is probably the most popular military scenario that has been examined in the west. Two generations of free world military officers and analysts have looked at it from the bits and pieces or the myriad operations that could be conducted within the scenario to the overall picture itself. The greater picture involves sorting out the strategic, tactical nuclear, and conventional possibilities for action at the North Atlantic, European, and intra-European levels. Since approximately 1980, the Soviets have increased their emphasis on extended conventional war and the west in parallel has decried the improvement growth in numbers of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. The Soviet emphasis on conventional war and western concern over the counter-productive aspects of tactical nuclear weapons, makes an extended conventional war fashionable today (1988). In such a scenario, the Soviets would launch a great, conventional ground and air attack out of East Germany and Czechoslovakia. It would have the strategic goals to defeat the NATO armed forces on the continent of Europe so decisively that the U.S. government would lose the will to continue the fight and withdraw, isolated and weakened, to the North American continent.

Scenarios such as the one suggested here have been used by western analysts for years. Planners have used them to forecast the outcome of entire wars, to gauge the impact of new technology, and to validate the effectiveness of newly considered small unit tactics. The purpose of the scenario presented here is to sort out the strategic missions assigned to the Soviet navy and show how the Soviets would apply operational art to the naval operations necessary to carry out those missions. The scenario is one of a vast, extended conventional war. In it the Soviets seek to occupy Western Europe from North Cape to the Straits of Gibraltar and exclude the United States from the affairs of Europe. These are heady Soviet strategic goals, indeed, almost outlandish. They are within the realm of possibility, however, and also represent the worst case possible for consideration of conventional war.

In such a scenario with goals so decisive, the Soviet army would take center stage in the existing key TVD (TSMA) for the Soviet Union -- the Western. Within the Western TVD (TSMA), above all other considerations, the High Command of Forces (HCOF) would make the ultimate calculations for the Soviets in beginning to plan for the offensive -- the correlation of forces between NATO and Warsaw Pact in the TVD (TSMA). The Soviets would be faced with a situation of almost overwhelming possibilities for action in terms of technical and tactical balances and time. They would be forced to consider ground numerical balances, qualitative technical balances based on weapons performance



characteristics, questions of the tactical qualities of forces in terms of command and combat soldier style, and the grand timing of the operation. With so much at stake, the Soviets would have to calculate the effects of operations conducted on the northern and southern flanks of the great advance westward -- the Northwestern and Southwestern TVDs (TSMAs), and, the plot thickens for the pursuit of the elusive Soviet naval operation and Soviet naval operational art, the Atlantic and Arctic oceanic TVD (TSMA).

One of the Soviet principles of war, the use of all assets, would come into play in Soviet calculations and force them both through Soviet science and Russian predilection to deploy the navy and assign it missions in support of a continentally oriented war for them. In the style of the Soviets, the General Staff would be faced with important questions of missions to be assigned to the navy and questions of higher level command and control. Questions in the following pattern would undoubtedly arise and probably be resolved as noted. What is the fundamental relationship between the Soviet army and navy in conventional war for the control of the continent of Europe? The answer would have to be that the Soviet General Staff would assign naval missions in the Arctic, Atlantic, Northwestern, and the Western (specifically Baltic Flank) TVDs (TSMAs) that would reflect the most direct support possible for the army in terms of a quick ground advance westward. This answer is supported by the Soviet style in which army predominates over navy, and the Western TVD

(TSMA) predominates over all others. The answer may not be the "right" one, however, because the Strategic Rear of the Soviet Union would be imperiled in the conventional scenario by U.S. bombers and missiles flown directly over the Soviet Arctic Ocean TVD (TSMA). It is difficult to grant even the Soviet army much control over the Arctic Oceanic TVD (TSMA). Either the navy or the air defense branch (PVO) of the Soviet armed forces would probably control the HCOF in the Arctic TVD (TSMA) in an extended conventional war. The scene is complicated additionally by Soviet concern over a conventional war escalating to the use of nuclear weapons. We must suspect that the strategic rocket force and the General Staff are poised to intervene in the Arctic giving an unusual cast to operations there even in an extended conventional war.

If the Soviets decided to launch a conventional attack in the west and took the initiative to plan and execute it, they would have to be considered to have seen significant chances of successes in the extended conventional war that they had begun. Let us relax, therefore, on the issue of nuclear escalation, and, except where necessary to understand certain correlated deployments of conventional forces and weapons, assume that the Soviets would move according to the conventional logic under which the attack had begun. The assumption is reasonable enough. We have only to consider that the Soviets had decided that if their conventional offensive moved fast enough that the west would be presented with the cruel choice between the certain

tactical nuclear destruction of Western Europe or the uncertain continuation of a conventional war under extremely adverse conditions and chose the latter situation.

Within an extended conventional war in Europe centered on the Western TVD (TSMA), what would be the role of the Soviet navy? Strong argument exists to support a view that the Soviets would use it as a seaward extension of the army and a combat support mechanism for it. The arguments in support of so conservative a role and associated conservative Soviet naval strategic missions, are the Soviet style and experience of the Great Patriotic War, the centralized and unified make up of the Soviet navy today which is not a mirror image of the sea control forces of the west but a powerful, uniquely Soviet sea denial instrument. Reasoning at this high level of consideration, we can hazard the picture that the Soviets would vigorously employ naval forces on the Baltic as a maritime extension of the Western TVD (TSMA). We can construct a Soviet naval operation there with considerable confidence and understand the style and spirit of Soviet naval operational art applied to it. Such a naval operation would be an amphibious one directly probably against the Danish islands between the Jutland Peninsula and Sweden, controlled by the army, and less instructive than the possibilities for naval operations farther north.

Moving into the Northwestern TVD (TSMA), we see numerous possibilities for the Soviets executing the naval operation. The awkward choice of words here -- the naval operation -- is



important to transfer the idea that the Soviets will not conduct a lot of battles which we would analyze from a western outlook as naval operations. In accordance with a unified military strategy and included naval strategic missions, the Soviets will painstakingly piece together the plan that will be executed as the engagements and strikes and maneuvers strung together to become the Soviet naval operation. If the Soviets tailored the boundaries close to the Norwegian coast, they would have roughly the following possibilities for naval operations:

Coastal Northwest TVD (TSMA): Soviet Naval Operation

1. Joint Amphibious Landings: control by army
2. Joint Amphibious Landings: control by navy
3. Combined Air Defense: control by PVO
4. Combined Air Defense: control by navy
5. Combined Air Defense: control by representatives of General Staff.

The joint amphibious landing is a strong bet to be one of the naval operations considered by the Soviets in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) in an extended conventional war. As such, the operation is similar in essence to the joint amphibious landing suggested as taking place in the Western TVD (TSMA) against the Danish Baltic islands. Unlike the peripheral landing operation in the Baltic, any significant landing in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) brings up questions of Soviet strategic military goals and dependent naval strategic missions. Soviet naval operational art -- a skill manifested in the operational plan to accomplish the



structures and missions through naval combat -- proceeds in accordance with the strategic military goal assigned to the strategic naval missions. The question that must be analyzed is: what would be the Soviet strategic military goals and associated naval strategic missions in the Northwest? The answer would probably be found among the following possibilities:

Northwestern TVD (TSMA): Possible Soviet Strategic  
Military Goals

1. Support of the Soviet Army in the Western TVD (TSMA).
2. Support of the Soviet Army in the seizure of the Norwegian coast in the Northwestern TVD.
3. Support of the Soviet Army in the seizure of Finland, Sweden, and the Norwegian coast in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA).
4. Support of the PVD in the Air Defense of the Strategic Rear.
5. Support of the Strategic Rocket Force by seizure of the Norwegian coast and Improved Defense of the Arctic Bastion.

The Soviets have the naval strength in and around the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) to conduct numerous types of operations in support of the strategic goals of an extended conventional war. The Soviets would plan and execute ends operations in order to accomplish one or more strategic missions derived from the above strategic military goals. The following are a few of these high level missions:

#### Northwestern TVD (TSMA): Possible Soviet Naval Missions

1. Seize and hold the Norwegian coast from Narvik to North Cape.
2. Seize and hold Narvik and the area around it.
3. Attack and destroy the Swedish navy in the Baltic.
4. Attack and destroy the Swedish and Finnish navies in the Baltic.

The matrix in Figure One analyzes the strategic situation in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) in terms of the Soviet options for running the Soviet naval operation. The matrix indicates that only in a most indirect way can a naval operation along the Norwegian coast or an operation against Sweden and Finland contribute to the advance of the fronts in the Western TVD (TSMA). If the Soviet army forces in the Northwest have the strategic goals of taking the Norwegian coast (north) and/or Sweden and Finland, the matrix indicates that the Soviet navy will conduct at least a naval landing operation along the Norwegian coast and a naval fleet operation against the navies and naval bases of the Swedish and Finnish navies.

As concerns a vital Soviet strategic military goal for the PVO -- the defense of the Strategic Rear from air attack over the Northwestern TVD (TSMA), -- the matrix shows that naval operations in support of the army seizure of the Norwegian coast

# Soviet Naval Strategic Missions\*

Soviet Strategic Military Goals**	Seize Norway Coast	Seize Narvik	Defeat Swedish Navy	Defeat Swedish & Finnish Navies
1. Supt Army, W	?	?	?	?
2. Supt Army, NW Coast	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO	?	?
3. Supt Army, NW SW-Fin	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO
4. Supt ASF, NW,+	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO
5. Supt SRF, Arctic++	Yes! SNO	Yes! SNO	?	?

\* W = West TSMA; NW = Northwest TSMA; VO = Air Defense Service;

XXX = Strategic Rocket Force

\*\* SNO = Soviet Naval Operation (or, snow)

+ASF = Aerospace Forces (PVO)

++SRF = Strategic Rocket Forces

Figure Two. Matrix Showing Possibilities for Conducting the Soviet Naval Operation (SNO) in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA)

and/or Sweden and Finland would be of great assistance. The situation would be a challenging one for the Soviet General Staff because of the necessity to maintain the "stability" of the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) and Scandinavia while simultaneously assuring the air defense of the Strategic Rear. As concerns a vital Soviet strategic military goal for the strategic rocket force -- the security and readiness of the Arctic strategic nuclear bastion -- the matrix shows that a naval fleet operation against the Swedish and Finnish navies would be pointless. Such a naval operation along with the advance of Soviet army forces into Finland and Sweden could destabilize the situation possibly to the extent of interfering with the army along the main strategic axes into Western Europe. In contrast, a Soviet naval landing operation on the Norwegian coast would contribute directly to the security of the Arctic bastion by extending the Soviet sea frontier westward along with accompanying naval and air bases and more effective Soviet sea denial in the Norwegian Sea.

Based on several strategic goals and notwithstanding whether or not the Soviet army would conduct an advance through Sweden and Finland, the Soviet navy would conduct a naval amphibious landing operation on the Norwegian coast. There would be some question on what service, the army or the navy, would control the operation. If, at the highest strategic level, the General Staff decided to include Sweden and Finland in the army scheme of maneuver, the army would probably control the landing operation on the Norwegian coast. The navy would probably control the



landing operation if the General Staff determined not to include Sweden and Finland as a ground battle area but only Norway. In either event, the Soviet navy would conduct great, predominantly naval amphibious operations from Vardo in the north to Narvik or possibly even Bodo in the south. In such a naval operation, the Soviets would face a situation almost unique for them. They would have to factor in the conduct of an almost independent naval operation on the blue water flank of the landing not only to protect the landing but to prevent the penetration of NATO naval forces into the Norwegian Sea.

NATO would have a strong naval presence both in the North Sea and the North Atlantic that would be an immediate threat to a landing operation against Norway. NATO naval forces would also be a threat to the naval basing area of the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) and the Strategic Rear of the Soviet Union through missiles and aircraft strikes over Scandinavia. And if this were not enough, the Soviets would be imperiled in the Arctic nuclear bastion by potential NATO naval forays or pressure through the Norwegian and Greenland Seas. NATO normally has two carrier battle groups in the North Atlantic armed and ready to the degree that the Soviets would have to take account of them at the beginning of an extended conventional war. We can assume that the Soviets would mount a Soviet naval fleet operation with the often noted anticarrier warfare (ACW) mission. The operation would be a combined one with the navy clearly in control but employing air force weapons as well as naval to defeat the

closest or most dangerous NATO carrier battle group. In addition to this great fleet operation, the Soviets would intensify the day-to-day operations of the ASW forces defending the Arctic strategic nuclear bastion and the Barents Sea naval bases. The Soviets, similarly, would intensify day-to-day operations of the submarine and support forces having the mission to interdict the NATO SLOCs between North America and Europe.

In the event of a Soviet ground offensive in Central Europe, there is not much doubt that the Soviet navy would contribute to the fight with all of its assets in the Baltic and northern areas. The question is: how would the Soviets organize the naval part of the war? The answer is that they would integrate it into the overall military strategy and apply naval operational art to the conduct of the naval operations required to support the strategy. Analysis above supports a conclusion that the Soviets would plan and conduct at least three offensively oriented naval operations. If such is the case, we should be able to take any one of the potential operations and use it as a vehicle to describe Soviet naval operational art and to forecast the activity and outcome of the operations. Probably the most important operation that the Soviets would execute would be the ACW operation required to ensure the strategic goal of denying the Norwegian Sea to NATO surface naval forces. The Soviets would use the same operation to protect the naval amphibious landing in Norway with all of its strategic goals and to support the submarine operation against the NATO SLOCs.

By focusing on the Soviet ACW naval operation and relating it especially with the amphibious landing operations against Norway, we should be able to get close to the spirit and style of the Soviets in naval operational art. Interesting high level considerations come into play immediately if we focus on the Soviet principles of military and naval operational art. In the Western TVD (TSMA), if the Soviets decided to launch a great, all-out offensive, they would apply above everything else the principles of concentration and surprise and the supporting mechanisms of deception. The Soviets, with awe-inspiring consistency claim that war will only come through a NATO attack. The Soviets, using the principle of military operational art described as readiness, would immediately respond with a great, coordinated counteroffensive of their own. We must assume, however, that the Soviets would exploit one of innumerable possible pretexts to claim that they were in immediate danger of attack and launch the vaunted counteroffensive noted so often in the literature. In effect, we must assume that the Soviets would be capable of launching an all-out offensive which would not necessarily be in response to any NATO attack. The end result-- the Soviets reserve to themselves the initiative to attack independently of any NATO action and the resultant capability to achieve surprise in addition to concentration of effort along the main axis of advance.

In the land war, in the Western TVD (TSMA), the Soviet army would move against NATO forces fixed in given ground. In the war



in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA), the Soviet navy would move against NATO forces similarly fixed on a given coast. In the war in the Arctic TVD (TSMA), assuming the Norwegian and Greenland Seas to be part of it, the Soviet navy would execute the naval operation having the strategic mission to defeat the NATO carrier task group in the vicinity of the Norwegian Sea. In succeeding in that mission, the Soviet navy would stabilize the great seaward flank of the ground advance in Western and Northwestern Europe. To succeed in that mission, the Soviet navy would apply the principles of operational art to the plan for the naval operation against the NATO carrier task forces. As a matter of both science and faith, the Soviets would apply the principles of operational art. Literally first and momentarily foremost among the principles in any offensive is that of surprise. The Soviets would labor to achieve surprise. How would they do this at sea?

The Soviets would face a fundamental stumbling block in achieving surprise not unlike the interservice problems faced by the Germans at the beginning of a similar great conventional offensive. In German Barbarossa, the following debate over the timing of the attack developed between army and air force, elements of which are analogous to the Soviet situation in any great offensive today: the German army insisted on attacking at first light and prior to the crossing of the border by aircraft of the air force; the air force pointed out that under such circumstances with its targets located well within Soviet Russia, the Soviet air force would be forewarned and the air attack fail



to catch the Soviet air force deployed in peacetime aspect on the ground; the German army completed this fundamental quandry by noting the complete validity of the air force argument but emphasizing that as the attacking aircraft roared over the border, the Soviet ground forces would be alerted and the German army would fail utterly to achieve tactical surprise with the resultant possible strategic failure.

For the Soviets, on the maritime flank, the question would be one of timing between the navy on the flank and the army in Central Europe. Soviet military operational art dictates the achievement of surprise both at sea, through application of naval operational art, and on land. In Central Europe, on land, fixed geographic ground terrain would predetermine front axes of advance and the location of the defense. Under these circumstances, the attacking Soviet ground forces would have the opportunity to attack almost any time of its choosing using a wide range of deception to contribute to surprise. In stark contrast, the naval "terrain" of the North Atlantic permits a deployed NATO carrier battle group to be virtually anywhere and constantly on the move. Through the use of deception, the Soviets might be able to achieve temporarily a concentration of Soviet naval forces about and around a NATO carrier battle group. If the Soviets could time this to take place when the carrier group was well within the Norwegian Sea, they could add a special additional concentration of aviation and patrol boat assets that could achieve an annihilating massed strike against a firmly

located carrier battle group. It is difficult to imagine the Soviets successfully orchestrating such a situation. Add the necessity for naval operational art to time the situation to occur simultaneously with the army selection of the best time for an attack on the ground in Central Europe, and we must admit the practical impossibility of the Soviets achieving tactical surprise simultaneously at sea and on the ground.

What would the Soviets do in such a quandry? Use of the historical method is valuable to begin to answer this query. In Barbarossa, the German army, the senior German service attacked at first light simultaneously with the overflight of the Soviet Russian border by the massed first wave of the German aerial strike. Even the powerful political figure, Hermann Goering, and his special support of the Luftwaffe could not accomplish a timing of the attack more favorable to the German air force. The historical lesson, albeit supported by only one historical "data point" -- the army of a continental power set the timing of a great surprise offensive to the potential disastrous detriment of a sister service. The army and Luftwaffe worked together to overcome the fundamental contradiction, as follows, and achieved in the actual offensive about as much success as conceivable. The Luftwaffe trained an elite element of 50 aircraft bomber crews in night navigation to overfly the Soviet border in full darkness and attack the target richest and most dangerous Soviet air fields simultaneously with the attack of the army at first light. In addition to this tactical stratagem and tactical

surprise, the Germans surprised the Soviets technically with the first massed employment of cluster bomblets -- the German SD-2 weapons. The historical case suggests that the Soviet army would dictate the timing of the attack even though a unified military strategy would be functioning, and that the Soviet navy would substantially overcome its problem of timing to achieve surprise.

In support of an army offensive in the Western TVD (TSMA) and the necessary defeat of the Strategic Rear and the naval strategic nuclear rocket forces in the Arctic bastion, the navy would mount an ACW operation in which surprise would be the single most important factor in the destruction of the carrier battle group (or groups) at the beginning of a war. In planning the ACW operation at the Atlantic edge of the Arctic Oceanic TVD (TSMA), the Soviets would employ what they would term as a scientific approach including the systematic application of the principles of naval operational art. The naval commander of the largely independent ACW operation and his staff would end up working in the Soviet framework presented in Figure Two.

In this framework, the Soviet commander of the prospective naval operation would get a lot of scientifically styled, mathematical assistance from the general and special staffs around him to include even mathematical probabilities of the chances of success in projected strikes, engagements, and maneuvers. The Soviet naval commander would be particularly sensitive to the overall correlation of forces and means in the



## The General Staff Marching Orders:

Defining of Strategic Military Objectives: Deny Norwegian Sea to NATO carrier task forces to support army offensive in west and to defend Strategic Rear and Arctic nuclear bastion.

Defining of Naval Strategic Mission: Defeat NATO carrier battle groups in North Atlantic.

## The Naval Operation (Planning):

### Naval Commander's Decisions

Naval staff's estimate of situation.

Naval staff's correlation of forces and means.

Naval commander's concept of the operation (application of the principles of naval operational art).

Naval staff's substantiation of the commander's concept (application of the science and system of probability, queuing theory, game theory).

Naval commander's decision (application of the principles of naval operational art).

### Naval Commander's Plan

Coordination Plan

Operational Support Plan (Deception, Logistics)

Operation Plan and Resultant Operation Order

The Naval Operation (Execution): The naval commander executes the engagements, strikes, and maneuvers that comprise the naval operation and are directed toward the accomplishment of the naval strategic mission.

Figure Three. Systematic Soviet Framework for the Assignment, Planning, and Execution of the Naval ACW Operation, Arctic TVD, Area Greenland-U.K. Gap



zone of operations. He would make demands through the Northern Fleet to the General Staff for reinforcement and even changes in missions in accordance with his evaluation of the naval balance of forces. Outside of this initial fundamental evaluation of the overall balance of force in the zone of operations, the Soviet naval commander would probably arrive at a concept of operations based largely on his personal experience of fleet exercises, reading of military and naval history, and resultant vicarious experience of war itself. In effect, the Soviet command would be bound largely by consideration of the principles of naval operational art, and he would apply based on his "sense" of reality in the success of the combat engagements, strikes, and maneuvers planned by him.

Constrained by a unified military goal and subject to almost complete dependence on the army for the time of beginning of the war, the naval commander would be forced to extract everything possible from the principles of naval operational art in conceptualizing, planning, and executing the naval operation. Unfortunately, the Great Fatherland War does not give us a nicely analogous case of extreme blue water naval operations on a maritime flank by Soviet naval forces. The Soviet naval operations in the Black and Baltic Seas were severely limited in scope, conducted against nonexistent (Black Sea) or relatively weak (Baltic Sea) naval forces, and conditioned by the immediate convenience of the army along a gray water coast. We can use the Great Fatherland War with a little imagination, to provide us

with valuable clues to the Soviet Russian mentality in naval situations.

Particularly in its big amphibious operations, the Soviet navy displayed a natural aptitude for cunning, resultant deception, achievement of surprise, and effective concentration of effort. We can detect in the Soviet Russian style an intriguing boldness and tactical aggressiveness lying right alongside of very different formalism and rigidity in military and naval operations. The personality of the Soviet naval commander would be probably the key factor in breaking the code of the ACW naval operation in the Arctic TVD (TSMA) at the beginning of a conventional offensive in the Western TVD (TSMA). Given the general mission that he would have to deny the Norwegian Sea to NATO carrier battle groups, a bold, pugnacious Soviet naval commander could practice a variety of deceptions (camouflage, misinformation, and feints), new tactics and weapons for naval use, and choice of axis or even location of attack that would force NATO carrier battle groups into an exploitable reaction.

What parts of Soviet naval operational art would encourage the Soviet naval commander to exploit the initiative associated with the decisive seizing of the initiative by the army in a surprise attack in the west? Soviet naval operational art demands the practice of deception and the achievement of surprise but how can these factors be applied in a military strategic situation in which the timing of the beginning of the war lies

with the army in its ground attack against fixed NATO armies in Central Europe?

In the North Atlantic, at the edge of the Arctic TVD (TSMA), the Soviets could work initially against ground terrain rather than against elusive, mobile carrier task forces forcing the latter into maneuver and action that could be anticipated by the Soviets and converted into the destruction of the carriers. The bold and unexpected seizure of Iceland at the same time as the advance into West Germany and landings along the Norwegian coast would be a dramatic surprise in terms of the axis of advance and the methods necessary to seize the place quickly. The seizure of Iceland could be timed effectively with the other ground and amphibious operations unlike a strike against NATO carrier battle groups at sea. For many fundamental reasons the great surprise naval strikes at the beginning of a war (or against neutrals) have been against naval forces "immobilized" in port, e.g., British against Danes at Copenhagen (1805), Japanese against Russians at Port Arthur (1904), and Japanese against Americans at Pearl Harbor (1941). By the surprise seizure of Iceland, the Soviets would not only deny the approaches to the Norwegian Sea to NATO but force its carrier battle groups into precipitate action at a time and place of Soviet choosing where naval ambush and other Soviet stratagems and actions could be prepared in advance. Diagram One illustrates the way in which Soviet naval operational art would develop under such circumstances complete with a picture of the operational area.

DIAGRAM ONE

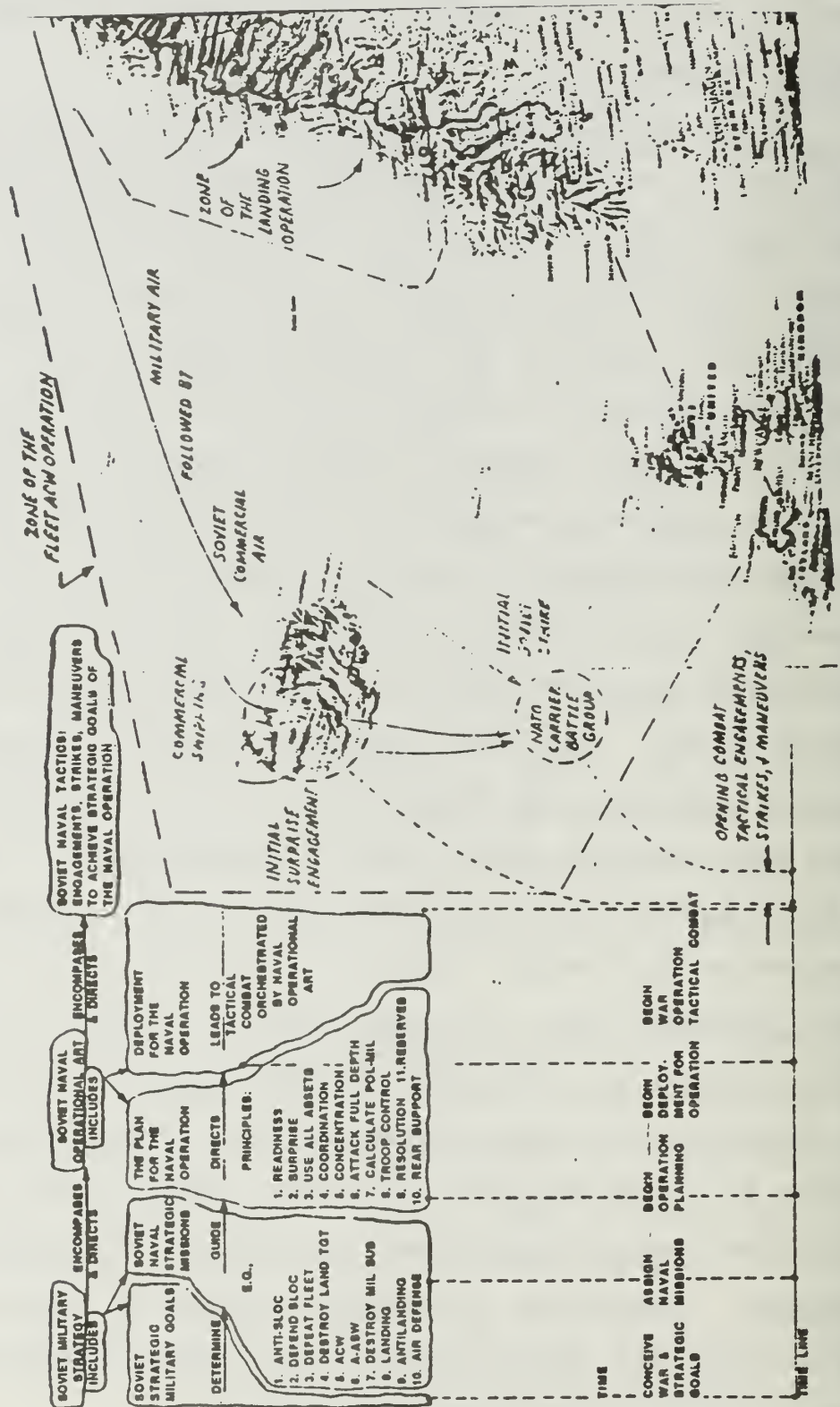


DIAGRAM ONE, SOVIET NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART: INCEPTION, PLANNING, DEPLOYMENT, COMBAT (OPENING)



## CHAPTER SIX

### A CONVENTIONAL WARFARE SCENARIO SOVIET EMIGRE COMMENTARY

The Soviet naval operation with the ACW strategic mission described in the preceding chapter could be identified as the advanced sea denial maneuver with the Iceland opening gambit. Within the super scenario of an extended conventional war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the Soviets would be impelled to deny the Norwegian Sea to NATO carrier group operations and would almost certainly mount a naval ACW operation as part of the effort to do so. The scenario is considered, therefore, to be realistic in general and reasonable in detail. The scenario is not intended to compete with any other in the sense of being the operation that the Soviets would embrace in the event of war. The scenario is intended as a means to get further into the mentality of the Soviets in conducting a naval operation and applying the skill of naval operational art. In order to verify the reasonableness of the generalities offered about Soviet naval operational art in the previous chapter, the primary researcher solicited the impressions of a Soviet emigre -- native-born Russian, exceptionally well-educated, service as commissioned officer in the Soviet army, sensitive to the make-up of the Russian character.

The Soviet expert was read into the general scenario and introduced to the point that the navy's ACW fleet operation in

the Arctic TVD (TSMA) would have timing subject to the operational necessities of the army in Central Europe. He agreed with the argument that it would be extremely difficult for the navy to achieve surprise against a maneuvering "inherently" alert NATO naval force at sea and almost impossible in the event the Soviet navy would not pick the time of attack. Faced with commenting on a situation in which the Soviet navy would face an enormous initial disadvantage in conducting a fleet operation in an ocean TVD (TSMA), the Soviet expert commented that such a situation was not unusual and that in any theater of war, the Soviets would "tilt the effort" toward the decisive instrument. The expert made it clear that the question was not one of navy versus army but of the operations being conducted and the overall "environment" of the war. For the expert, it was evident that the ground attack in the Western TVD (TSMA) could lead quickly to the occupation of the entire continent of Europe. No naval operation could accomplish the equivalent.

The Soviet expert went on to elaborate that the Russians have had centuries long experience of problems with productive resources. The Russians have faced a unique combination of scanty natural resources changing to a surfeit but always chronic weaknesses in production either because of outright backwardness or more subtle, self-defeating authoritarian political controls. As a result, the Russians have had to make hard choices. It is easy for the Russians to set priorities; it is natural for them to enforce priorities. The Soviet navy could scarcely be

surprised at receiving a lower priority for its fleet ACW operation in the environment of a land war close to the western border of the Soviet Union.

In terms of naval operational art, the Soviet navy would face the absolute necessity to achieve surprise in its fleet naval operation. No greater opportunity can exist to exploit surprise than at the beginning of a war under the very special circumstances of a surprise offensive out of the political situation of peace and into war. Faced with mounting a naval fleet operation within the framework of a war "tilted" in timing and space toward the ground offensive in Central Europe, the Navy would require special stratagems indeed to achieve some element of surprise leading to the defeat of the NATO carrier battle groups deployed in the North Atlantic at a time chosen according to the dictates of a non-naval environment. The Soviet expert had a ready answer for the Soviet Russian mentality in such a situation; the Soviets would "outsmart" their opponents. They would achieve essentially a grand "mental surprise" against NATO opponents whom they continue to gauge as superior technicians. Having already been introduced to the Iceland gambit, the Soviet expert considered it well within the Soviet Russian style to apply cunning (hedrost) and elaborate camouflage (maskirovka) to the bold, surprise seizure of Iceland.

The Soviet expert implied in the arguments above and went on to state directly that the Soviet style in surprise emphasizes outsmarting an opponent rather than springing breakthroughs in

military technology. The statement suggests the generalization that cunning and camouflage in Soviet deception and associated surprise in Soviet naval operational art, will be tactically oriented somewhat more than technically. It is well known, of course, that the Soviets place special emphasis on scientific technology and have come to match the west fairly closely in military technology. The point is that the Russian historical condition and Soviet technology have combined in Soviet naval operational art to make cunning and hiding uniquely important. This special importance is difficult to understand from a western perspective. This difficulty is also compounded since the Soviets will use sophisticated electronic camouflage at sea to achieve what they consider to be important, albeit primitive, tactical surprise.

The warning in accepting such a generalization is that the Soviets would take any opportunity presented to them to spring technological surprise in combat. The Soviets, for example, in the Great Fatherland War claim an element of technical surprise and superiority over the Germans that matched any other factor in importance for the repulse of the enemy at Moscow in December 1941. The Soviets claim the T-34 main battle tank as that element of technical surprise and few can doubt its importance in the fighting from October-December 1941. The T-34, however, was designed largely in an evolutionary sense as the follow-on vehicle to a large mass of Soviet cavalry-style tanks with severe weaknesses in armor protection. The Soviets produced a tank that



proved to be "revolutionary" in design but the Soviets never intended that effect. Even in the case of the defense of Moscow, therefore, we see the Soviets being lucky in the earlier German misdirection of effort away from Moscow and skillful tactically and operationally in saving enough forces and mobilizing others to survive in 1941. This historical sketch suggests that even in the case of the T-34, the Soviets did not intend the tank to be a special element of technical surprise and that the Soviet style in combat revolved more around cunning, a mania for the preservation of reserves no matter what the crisis, ruthless suborning of all assets, etc. -- essentially tactical factors and large numbers of good weapons.

The Soviet expert continued in the case of a surprise seizure of Iceland that the Soviets had the deceptive skills to achieve surprise in air and sea landings. He agreed also that they had the tactical skills in combat to make the seizure largely assured in a coup de main at the beginning of a war. In a nice insight into potential Soviet mentality in war, the Soviet expert elaborated that the big issue for the Soviets in naval operational art would be whether or not they could hold Iceland successfully. The primary researcher pointed out that the issue for Soviet naval operational art was not one of holding Iceland as if it were a continentally styled piece of ground terrain but as a lure to force the NATO carrier battle groups into a precipitous, predictable counterattack that the Soviets would exploit into quick destruction of the carriers. Such destruction

would include surprise fires from Soviet ground and air forces deployed on Iceland and from commercial vessels sited in the fjords.

If and when the Soviets destroyed the initially deployed NATO carrier battle groups and the Soviet ground forces defeated the NATO ground forces on the continent of Europe, the Soviets would almost certainly make the decision to hold on to Iceland and probably be successful. If the Soviet ground forces failed to defeat the NATO ground forces on the continent, the General Staff would face a great decision of whether to attempt to hold it in the face of a massive buildup of NATO naval forces in the North Atlantic or fight hard, but cut its losses and sacrifice the forces on the island. The Soviet expert commented unhesitatingly that the Soviets would sacrifice the forces in a hard fight, pinning down NATO forces as long as possible. The Soviet expert argued in a thought-provoking metaphor that the Russians are chess players and in chess you sacrifice. The following roughly analogous historical situation suggests itself in support of the expert opinion that the Soviets have a style of sacrificing: In June and July 1942, the Soviets faced final defeat in an exposed "island" of resistance -- the fortress of Sevastopol on the Crimean Peninsula. The Soviets had been fighting an incredibly stubborn but losing battle since the isolation of the fortress in November 1941. The Soviet General Staff determined to sacrifice the troops and civilians in the fortress in the interests of delaying the German offensive

building in the south during the first half of 1942. The Soviet sacrifice of man and fortress is exemplified by fighting on 29 June 1942 in which the German 50th Infantry Division advanced over the Inkerman Heights, and the Soviet military commanders and political commissars in vast champagne cellars on the western slopes instead of surrendering after a battle lost, set off an explosion that collapsed 90 feet of rock over a length of 900 yards burying thousands of combat troops, wounded, and civilians. The style was one of sacrifice within a sacrifice.

In a general overview of naval warfare on the seaward flank of the Western TVD (TSMA), the Soviet expert tied together some inciteful observations on Soviet strategy and operations in the Baltic, Scandinavia, and out into the northern seas. He stated emphatically that the Soviet Russians with their conservative, heavy, continentally conditioned historical style could not accept the uncertainties and dangers of a neutral Sweden and Finland in a conventional war in the west. The Soviets simply could not stomach the vagaries of 750,000 well-armed Western Europeans in so critical a location as Sweden. Neutrality, diplomatic agreement, etc., would be unacceptable to the Soviets in an all-out conventional war. The expert gauged the Soviet strategic mind as one that would demand a free rein in Scandinavia and the operational style as one in which the Soviets would not allow the mobilization of the Swedish armed forces. With the latter consideration, the Soviets could not mount their main operation through Finnmark; it would take so long to develop



into Sweden and come from such a direction that the Swedes would be able to effect mobilization and present effective resistance. The Soviet expert sees the Soviets demanding something more direct, quicker, immediately paralyzing and presenting great strategic possibilities.

Based on the strategic premise that the Soviets would have to take Sweden and the operational premise that they would prevent Swedish mobilization, the Soviet expert sees the possibility of a naval landing operation directed straight at Stockholm. The landing force would have three great strategic missions. It would seize Stockholm immediately to disrupt the national command authority. It would direct forces along multiple axes into the heaviest populated areas to paralyze the Swedish mobilization. It would project a mobile force styled like an operational maneuver group out of the large amphibious bridgehead. The mobile force would advance through Sweden and then along two final axes into the Oslo area essentially breaking into the "soft underbelly" of Norway from a dramatically surprising direction. These projections are certainly interesting but what about their reality?

Two foremost questions can be asked to test the reality of Soviet naval operations against South Central Sweden. The first is: would the Soviets launch a campaign in Scandinavia that would possibly destabilize the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) to the detriment of the advance in Central Europe? The dilemma would be a cruel one with a tough campaign against the Swedes having to be



balanced against the uncertain dangers from a powerful neutral force in a strategic location. The Soviet expert is probably right; the Soviets would be driven to tidy up things in Scandinavia. The second question concerns the operational capabilities of the Soviet navy, army, and air force in a major landing operation. Would the Soviets have enough strength in men and weapons and the skill especially in naval operational art to apply to the Swedish landing? Almost instinctively, the Soviet expert commented that perhaps the main strength of the Soviets was relentless emphasis on numbers and that the men, weapons, and shipping would not be an obstacle to the strategy.

The question of naval operational art is quite another. The army would be the controlling service in a Swedish operation but the navy would be more critical even than the army on the issue of the technical and tactical importance of its operations. In terms of the skill of operational art, the navy would be responsible almost entirely for successful deception, the achievement of surprise in the entire operation, and the buildup ashore of ground forces fast enough so that the army could carry out its vast set of raiding-like operations -- the coup de main in downtown Stockholm, the advances into the Swedish mobilization areas, and the seizure and holding of Oslo for follow-up forces. In effect, the navy would be responsible for the concentration of forces for the operation and the "breakthrough attack," which the successful seizure of an adequate bridgehead ashore would represent in an amphibious operation. The army, in effect, would

be the force that would exploit naval deception and surprise and the concentration of specialized naval infantry in the successful seizure of a beachhead ashore.

With the immensely important strategic mission to effect a landing that would have the strategic goal to take Sweden and Norway out of the war within days, the navy would be bound to a classical application of naval operational art. The Soviet navy, for example, would have to deceive both the Swedes and NATO into believing that in the event of an extended conventional war that Sweden would not be a Soviet target but that naval activity including important landings could be expected against the Danish islands. In the bold and challenging Kerch-Feodosiya landings of December 1941, the Red Navy of the day disguised the concentration of forces and movements of shipping for the landings as part of the effort to reinforce the powerful Soviet forces besieged at Sevastopol. A similar application of navy operational art would take place in the Baltic. Not everything would be generally similar to this valuable historical case. In the Kerch-Feodosiya episode, for example, the Soviets succeeded in deception and surprise by strong landings around Kerch that forced the Germans to fight hard and rivet their attention there. Two days later, the Soviets landed even stronger forces at Feodosiya far to the west, achieving a devastating surprise as concerns the location of the main axis of the attack. In the hypothesized Swedish landing operation, the Soviets would have no such "luxury" in deception through delay of the major attack--

literally every hour would count in developing the attack inland from the moment of the first landing.





## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SOVIET NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART: APPLICATION TO THE RED SIDE OF WESTERN WAR GAMES

The Soviet naval operation is a higher level form of Soviet naval warfare that strings together combat strikes, engagements and maneuvers into a purposeful series of actions designed to achieve centrally designated, unified Soviet strategic military goals. The Soviets apply the skill of Soviet naval operational art in the planning of the naval operation and the execution of the combat actions and maneuvers that make it up. The Soviets will conduct naval warfare according to the dictates of naval operational art which is a skill that emphasizes principles, methods, factors, processes, directed by a scientific, systematic approach and historical style different from that in the west. The fact that the Soviet Russians and many of the nationalities now controlled by them "think" differently in their approach to fighting wars has caused some to characterize it as unfathomable and subject to erratic change not unlike the movement of an untethered, wheeled gun carriage on the deck of former vessels of war at sea. But different is not necessarily unintelligible, and Soviet naval operational art has been described, lauded,

characterized, and painted in historical example by the Soviets enough to make it no longer a mystery.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1980s, strategic war gaming has become popular in the United States due to the evident lack of realism of mathematical models and computer simulations of theater and global war fighting situations. Strategic war games include theater and global war games, strategy assessment games, and broad, high level political-military seminar games. Strategic war games have several purposes including the education of the human actors taking part in them in the processes of decision making in simulated crisis. The most important practical purpose of the strategic war game is to assist in the planning of anticipated military operations globally and at the theater level. As one of the most important available tools in planning for war, the strategic war game can have crucial impact on the initial stages of wars fought under plans validated by the games. Blue or friendly side actors in war games will accurately portray their own forces and style although the plans derived from the games may still lead to military defeat. Red or enemy side actors in war games present a different case. Blue actors necessarily will represent Red side with increased opportunity for the input of unrealistic numbers, weapon performance characteristics, and command style, and the vastly increased possibility of faulty

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<sup>1</sup>For this metaphor, see Lieutenant Arthur Scott Mobley, Jr., Beyond the Black Box: An Assessment of Strategic War Gaming, Naval Postgraduate School Master's Thesis (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1987), p. 64.

plans. Relatively ill understood at present, the Soviet naval operation is orchestrated through the skill of Soviet naval operational art and demands understanding if strategic war games involving naval warfare are to be valid.

The search then is for the things that characterize Soviet naval operational art. The purpose of the search is to take the factors that characterize naval operational art and hang them out as warning and lessons before the western human actors engaged in strategic war games. First, the warning.

The Soviets conduct naval warfare with weapons, weapon platforms, and combat tactics similar to those in the west. The Soviets practice military strategy similarly to the way that it is practiced in the west in terms of rational, coordinated strategic goals and missions. The first warning of real difference in form comes with the Soviet declaration that there is no naval strategy. What the west would present as naval strategy the Soviets designate as the theory of the navy. With claim of scientific superiority, they elaborate on the point that there can be only one central, unified military strategy and create the pedantic category of the Soviet theory of the navy in place of a Soviet naval strategy. At this point of fundamental similarity between Soviet and western tactics and pedantic difference between strategy, a warning sign must be hoisted. Pontifically, the Soviets claim a fundamental new category of military art -- military operational art -- the naval version of which is naval operational art. Any war game with a naval

scenario that fails to factor in Soviet naval operational art will be subject to catastrophic failure in any purpose that it might have -- education of participants, discovery of new perspectives, and most important, development of plans for war.

The Soviet naval operation is created and played out by Soviet naval operational art. The special characteristics of the art stand out in the following qualifying highlights:

Soviet Naval Operational Art, Inputs, Red Side,  
Strategic War Games

- \* Input Cunning (hedrost) to contribute to Deception.
- \* Input Camouflage (maskirovka) to contribute to Deception.
- \* Input Deception to contribute to Surprise.
- \* Input Surprise (exploits friendly initiatives).
- \* Input Readiness (defends against enemy initiative).
- \* Input Correlation of Forces and Means.
- \* Input Concentration of Forces and Means (joint landing operations).
- \* Input Massing of Strikes (independent, combined, or combined fleet operations).
- \* Input Unified Strategic Military Goals.
- \* Input Militarily Synchronized Naval Strategic Mission.

In any strategic war game that contains a naval warfare scenario in which the Soviets are on the offensive, the controlling agent of the game must construct a Soviet naval operation in which the Soviets practice deception and achieve surprise. By doing this, the controlling agent will not only accurately portray the immense initial disability of the side



giving up the initiative but also realistically present the historical reality that the attacker who attempts to achieve surprise will virtually always succeed. In conducting the ACW naval operation as part of an advance of the Soviet army into the Western TVD (TSMA), the Soviet navy could conduct an included landing on Iceland that would have elements of strategic, operational (for the Soviets) and tactical surprise in it. The cunning stratagem and masking of attacking forces would include the seizure of the airport at Keflavik by special operations forces (SPETSNAZ) in Soviet commercial airliners, reinforcement by air landed troops in Il-76/Candide and An-22/Cock transport aircraft flying straight out of the Soviet Union and supported by additional combat and logistical support forces and means deployed hidden in commercial and special fishing vessels.<sup>2</sup> Historical precedent here can be found both in the Soviet seizure of Prague international airport (1978) and the bold, direct German attack on Norway (1940). The purpose of the landing described above would be to contribute directly as part of a greater ACW naval operation to the defeat of the NATO carrier battle groups in the North Atlantic.

Control agents in strategic war games in which the Soviets are on the offensive against western forces must include in principle achievement of surprise and the appropriate improvements in strategic position and the inflicting of damage

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<sup>2</sup>Note the range of 4,200 km with full payload of 175 troops or 80 tons of material for the An-22/Cock and similar performance for the Il-76 Candid.

by Red side. Such a situation must be jarring because the achievement of surprise presupposes the strong possibility of defeat on the part of the defending NATO forces. Soviet naval operational art, however, is both bold and conservative. If the Soviets have decided to attack and have used bold stratagems, they have done so after conservative consideration of the correlation of forces and convinced themselves of substantial probabilities of success. Control agents in war games in which the Soviets are on the defensive must consider that the unique Soviet principle of naval operational art defined as readiness will be operating. Readiness is the unusual Soviet defensive running mate of surprise. Extraordinarily sensitive about the prospect of being surprised at the beginning of any war, the Soviets beat on the theme to include ultra-sensitivity on the defensive to western accomplishment of surprise. This unique principle of Soviet naval operational art -- readiness -- is a warning. Control agents in war games must take account of special difficulties for Blue forces achieving surprise against the Soviet navy.

The Soviets consider cunning, camouflage, deception and surprise as important in the naval operation because they are methods and principles that contribute to concentration of effort along the main axis of the attack. These words have a military, ground forces ring to them because of the unified nature of Soviet military art. The issue is not so much that the army will predominate in extended conventional war but that a scientific,

systematic, unified set of principles of military art must apply to all services. The Soviets express the naval version of concentration of forces along a physical avenue of movement in terms of the massing of strikes along the least defended direction of attack. In a no-nonsense, Clausewitzean style, the Soviets feel that only armed combat brings victory in war. The Soviets in turn translate armed combat in the naval operation into the surprise, massed strike of the missiles, aircraft, and torpedoes of the Soviet naval force independent or combined with formation of the other branches of the armed forces.

Just massing fires is not enough for the Soviets. They demand that their naval forces mass fires by surprise along unsuspected directions of attack so effectively as to preempt the fires of the opposing naval forces. We cannot fault the Soviets for having these objectives; such results are a consummation devoutly to be desired. We suspect the worst in naive optimism on the part of the Soviets in believing that they can bring together results such as these in the naval zone of operations. Yet there is a certain intensity in the arguments and the Soviets go on in a grinding, banal manner to demand that their naval forces initially concentrate on the destruction of western reconnaissance and observation assets. The Soviets intend to keep their own reconnaissance forces intact and achieve the first massed strike so crucial to naval forces engaged at long ranges with accurate, lethal missiles. All of this is not just talk, it is Soviet naval operational art. The control agent in the



strategic war game must factor in on Red side in the naval part of the scenario, the stubborn energy and bold ingenuity on the part of the Soviets to achieve this result.

The Soviet naval operation is part of a team play. The Soviets pride themselves on scientific and systematic unification of military doctrine and military art. In war, the Soviets will fight with a unified military strategy that will dictate the naval strategic mission to be accomplished by the skill of naval operational art. The Soviet naval operation constructed by naval operational art will fit into the bigger picture of Soviet military strategy. The operation will be predictable for those who have broken the code of centralization and unification. In the popular scenario of a Soviet army offensive in Central Europe as part of an extended conventional war, the Soviet navy would conduct a major landing operation in the Baltic in support of the army in the Western TVD (TSMA). The Soviet navy would conduct an even more important landing operation along the Norwegian coast in support of military goals assigned to the army in the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) particularly in the event that the central Soviet military strategy demanded the seizure of Scandinavia to stabilize the Northwestern TVD (TSMA) as a vital contribution to several other goals. Even if the army were not assigned the goal to seize Finland and Scandinavia, the navy would conduct the same naval landing operation against Norway in support of geographically integrated strategic military goals of the PVO, strategic rocket force, and the navy itself. The



control agent of the strategic war game must recognize the predictability of the Soviet naval operation and factor in those operations according to the principles and style of naval operational art.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### IDEAS ABOUT SOVIET NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART

At higher levels of thought, the Soviets define military strategy as the "upper spectrum" of military art encompassing the theory and practice of preparing the country and the armed forces for war as well as planning and conducting the war and strategic operations in it.<sup>1</sup> For the Soviets, there is a supporting theory of military strategy which is a system of scientific knowledge that examines the conditions of war, the methods for conducting it, and the carrying out of strategic operations. The Soviets elaborate especially that military strategy is closely linked to politics, results from it and serves it. The Soviets tend to focus at a high level when conceptualizing and applying strategy as exemplified in V.I. Lenin's words that "strategy is subordinate to politics, and one is inseparably linked to the other."<sup>2</sup> Beat upon by words like these, we could become suspicious that what the Soviets call strategy we would designate: grand strategy.

In the Soviet Union, the communist party (CPSU) and the government overlap almost completely and the two entities control the country through centralized state planning, for example, the famed multiyear economic plans. As concerns defense and the all

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<sup>1</sup>ONI, SME, Naval, I, entry: Military Strategy.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

important war planes, it is no surprise that military strategy will be very close to the highest level political considerations. With a hard-hearted, continentally conditioned mentality, the CPSU and the government are sensitive to security and determined to develop centrally all resources of the state in the interests of defense. Even more important, the CPSU will practice extreme controls in order to maintain itself in political power. This practice of control will be accentuated in the case of the militarily disciplined armed defense forces more than any technical social elite in the state. The unique CPSU emphasis on control demands that Soviet military strategy be a very high level, politically influenced system of thinking both in order to bend all assets to the interests of state survival against foreign attack and to assure the predominance of the party internally. With these considerations driving it, Soviet military strategy will be like western grand strategy, i.e., something rather different from U.S. military strategy but similar to what we would refer to as grand strategy.

How does this interpretation of Soviet military strategy help us to understand Soviet naval operational art? With military strategy set in the Soviet Union at the higher political and military levels, we see a wide gap between this politically styled "military" strategy and the tactical combat of war. With so general an outlook on strategy, it is not surprising that the party and the interrelated higher command of the armed forces would find it necessary to link such strategy with tactics. For



the CPSU, the link would add another layer of control over the armed forces in a state characterized as accommodating a transmission belt society. For the Soviet ruling elite, a body characterized perhaps as "the bureaucracy," operational art would be a peculiarly Soviet adjustment in a society that rejects spontaneity. For the more senior commanders in the Soviet armed forces, military and naval operational art represents an element of strict paternalistically styled control required to keep a huge, severely inhibited, and sometimes fearful body of troops in line and on course. Even more important for the military commanders in the armed forces, naval and military operational art represents the necessary skill and activity to coordinate battles, engagements, strikes, and maneuvers into a linked set of tactical actions capable of achieving naval or military strategic goals. Interestingly enough, U.S. officers would describe such activity under the heading of strategy and do so naturally and without the tone of scientific hysteria found in Soviet descriptions of naval operational art.

These very general observations suggest that the following contrasting situation exists between Soviet and U.S. thinking about the levels of action in war.

## Contrasting Soviet-U.S. Levels of Action in War

<u>Soviet</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Soviet Military Strategy	U.S. Grand Strategy
Soviet Theory of the Navy	-
Soviet Naval Operational Art	U.S. Naval Strategy
Soviet Naval Tactics	U.S. Naval Tactics

The Soviets conceptualize that faced with modern economic productive forces and the political-social phenomenon of conscription, the art of naval warfare produced a new form of fleet combat activity -- the naval operation. Modern economies and the phenomenon of huge peacetime standing armies and greater mobilized forces produced the spectacle of large, mixed naval forces of surface combat vessels combined with submarine, torpedo boats, destroyers (of torpedo boats), cruisers, and naval aircraft. Referencing this "scientific" analysis of changes in naval warfare, the Soviets claim to have applied further scientific analysis to the creation of the Soviet naval operation and the orchestrating skill of naval operational art. The Soviets note, for example, that they began to use the term "operational art" in 1922, and they formally articulated military and naval art into strategy, operational art, and tactics in 1926.<sup>3</sup> In the west, in contrast, the United States has not developed a theory of naval operational art to the present day, and the West Germans, who inherited the highest reputation for

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<sup>3</sup>Soviet Union, MED, VI, pp. 2148, 2149.

the conduct of war at the operational level, continue to address it in a fluid, historical style in contrast to stiff Soviet emphasis on numbers, equations, and claims of scientific "rigor." Again, based on such argument, we must suspect that the Soviets embraced operational art partly -- perhaps even largely -- as a means to the ends of more effective political and high level military control over the armed forces and more effective "troop control" by the higher level military commanders in war.

Touted by the Soviets as a scientific response to a systematically analyzed historical situation, naval operational art may represent more accurately a political-social control syndrome on the part of the Soviet Russians. Instead of being understood as military science and system, Soviet naval operational art might be approached more effectively as authoritarian bureaucratic controls by Russians in the cassocks of modern Soviet communists. As such it would represent a peculiarity of the Soviet Union rather than part of a necessary scientific development of modern military "art." Either way, as science or political-social control, naval operational "art" is a powerful tool in the hands of the west for predicting Soviet courses of action in naval warfare. The plan for the naval operation, particularly as influenced by the elements of political control and military paternalism, will be infallible. It must be right if it is passed down by higher authority. It can fail only if it is misunderstood or misapplied by subordinate commanders. As part of the necessary military rules of the game,



the Soviets would have to apply the war fighting principles of naval operational art -- readiness, surprise, massing, coordination, maneuver, etc. -- with unquestioning consistency.

These elements of scientific system, political control, and senior officer paternalism and pedantry combine to make Soviet naval operational art predictable; acknowledged principles are applied along with known methods to assure their successful application. Concentration, for example, is probably the single most important principle of Soviet military operational art. In the navy, this principle takes the form of the massing of strikes against the strongest opposing fleet targets and is directly served by most of the other principles notably surprise, coordination, and maneuver. Reflecting their preoccupation with science, the Soviets will apply numbers and mathematics (algorithms or algebraic equations) in the initial stages of the planning of the naval operation. The numbers and equations are put together to systematically establish the correlation of forces between the Soviet navy and an opponent in the zone of operations. The Soviets consider this correlation of forces as *de rigeur* in the planning phase of naval operational art and use it to gauge the possibilities of achieving the massing of strikes against an opponent in a successful enough manner to achieve assigned strategic missions.

Western naval commanders and staffs make similar estimates but in a less pretentious style. The estimates are important in the west. When the Soviets add elements of control, paternalism,



and pedantry, the correlations of force becomes more than important to them; they become mandatory to be calculated and once calculated become infallible rules for action or inaction. The Soviets advise their commanders that correlations of forces are guides and that the commander must bring to bear his experience, judgment, etc., to make a final decision. It is difficult to imagine a Soviet commander, however, making a decision to launch an offensive naval operation without an appropriate correlation of force. Because naval forces are more difficult to conceal physically at sea and more difficult to deploy secretly out of port, the naval correlation will probably be a surer guide than most activities in ground TVDs (TSMAs) that a crisis in peacetime is developing into war. The surest guide to potential Soviet action may be the predictable emphasis in Soviet naval operational art on correlation of force and concentration of effort. Notwithstanding what the ground balance may appear to be at any time, given the Soviet penchant for unified strategy, the naval correlation would probably be the ultimate danger sign of impending Soviet attack to all western forces in the potential theater of war.

In the greatest surprise military offensive of all time, the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, the following amazing occurrence came close to destroying the element of surprise. The Germans had managed by the middle of June through grand efforts in misinformation, secrecy, and camouflage to have concentrated near the Soviet border approximately 157 German

divisions and more than half of the Luftwaffe. Thanks to German deception and Soviet overconfidence, misreading of certain signs, and the probability of offensive plans of the Soviets, the German high command had achieved almost complete strategic and tactical surprise when on 17 June 1941, German naval forces in the Baltic began mine clearing operations in an act of almost incredible miscoordination with the rest of the armed forces. The operations were conducted in German waters off the East Prussian coast and were unobtrusive. They were detected, nevertheless, by Soviet naval forces in the Special Baltic Military District and reported through the Soviet naval chain of command. Thanks largely to a ponderous, fearful bureaucratic style of reporting and passing information, the Soviet government did not receive the single most unmistakable piece of evidence of an impending great offensive until it was too late to act. Although the Soviets pride themselves on ruthless unification of strategy, the difference in the naval environment of combat could well lead to analogous faux pas by the Soviet armed forces in similar large scale operations.

Ground Attack from a Standing Start:  
Is There a Naval Version?

The Soviets could launch a ground offensive in a continental TVD (TSMA), for example, the Western, with only the forces in place. Such an offensive could be described as an attack from a standing start, and, although challenging for the Soviets, the attack must be considered to be technically feasible. The Soviet

Russians showed combat skills in the Great Patriotic War-- battle stratagems, peasant cunning, infiltration, improvised river crossings, etc. -- that suggest natural tactical skills favoring a surprise attack with forces in place. The Soviet practice of army operational art with its emphasis on systematic meticulous planning and check list style of applying the principles of operational art, supports a view that the Soviets would be perhaps uniquely capable of such action. On the other hand, there are strong objections. In applying operational art to an attack from a standing start, the Soviets would calculate the correlation of forces. The Soviets have probably already made this calculation and may have determined that with existing balances an attack from a standing start is not a reasonable alternative for a Soviet military operation in the Western TVD (TSMA). Even more importantly, the Soviets may actually believe their own propaganda and not be prepared to launch a surprise attack at all against an intact NATO coalition. In counterpoint to these objections to a surprise attack, the Soviets probably are reserving to themselves the option to react to perceived NATO aggression with a preemptive attack which could take place no matter how adverse the correlation of force to gain time for the Soviets to save themselves from the postulated aggression.

Let us assume that the Soviets have plans to launch a preemptive style offensive in the Western TVD (TSMA). Notwithstanding the motives driving the Soviets to make such an attack, motives that could be either naked, unprovoked aggression



or "preemptive reaction" to perceived, impending NATO attack, the Soviet offensive would be a real danger to the survival of NATO. Within such a scenario of surprise attack, how would the Soviet navy launch operations from an equivalent standing start in support of the army through means of a unified set of naval strategic missions and associated strategic military goals? Two grand although straightforward possibilities for naval action surface immediately. The Soviet navy is fundamentally a sea denial instrument and would deny the Norwegian Sea to NATO naval forces by defensively oriented "barrier" operations designed to prevent the penetration of NATO submarines, carrier battle groups, aviation, and landing forces. Alternatively, the Soviet navy could carry out the same sea denial mission by offensively oriented naval operations. In this case, the Soviets would take advantage of surprise in the opening of a war by attacking the more dangerous NATO naval forces, e.g., carriers and submarines, in the Greenland-U.K. gap or concentrated and fixed in naval forces. The key issue for the Soviets in the choice of how to deny the Norwegian Sea to NATO naval forces would be the one of self-confidence and skill in naval operational art.

For the Soviets, naval operational art pivots around deception, surprise, and massing of strikes in fleet operations and concentration of force in landings. This thesis is overstated but probably correctly represents a Soviet preoccupation with those principles. At the opening of a war begun at their own initiative, it is difficult to believe that



the Soviets would not do everything possible to exploit the results of surprise. This line of reasoning supports a view that the Soviets would launch offensively oriented naval operations in the event of an army attack from a standing start in the Western TVD (TSMA). The Soviets, for example, instead of just effecting a surge of naval forces from port areas of the Northern Fleet as they have been observed to do in exercises, would superimpose on the surge an additional set of engagements, strikes, and maneuvers by naval forces already on station. This set of actions by relatively weak naval forces on station would be the real parallel of army forces "on station" or close up against NATO ground forces in Central Europe. Unlike the Soviet Group of Forces Germany that can remain independently in close proximity to NATO ground forces, the Northern Fleet faces a naval environment in which the entire fleet cannot stay on station at sea indefinitely.

In the ocean environment, Soviet sea denial forces normally on station in the vicinity of NATO sea control forces will be relatively weaker than in the ground situation. On the ground, powerful Soviet-dominated ground forces, superior in numbers of personnel, tanks, artillery, and supporting aircraft, will be normally located next to thinner NATO ground forces conveniently fixed in position by the necessity to hold various terrain. In attacking from an unreinforced, non-surge deployment, the Soviet navy would face epic challenge in massing strikes effectively against superior, maneuvering naval forces. The Soviets would be

forced in this scenario to use surprise to compensate for the disparity in strength. They would also have to show artistry in applying the principle of coordination in naval operational art to ensure that all assets -- surface, submarine, and aviation-- were factored into the surprise attack on NATO naval forces at sea.

The Soviets would be forced to work hardest in the methods of deception and the principle of surprise to expect important let alone decisive results in a naval attack from a standing start. Similarly to the scenario suggested earlier in this report, the Soviets could achieve formidable results by attacking fixed terrain of strategic naval importance in the North Atlantic. Iceland is strategically located in the Greenland-U.K. gap and has two additional features that make it almost uniquely attractive for attack from the viewpoint of the skills and style of thinking in Soviet naval operational art. Iceland is an exceptionally large island in terms of being an island marked for amphibious attack, and is virtually uninhabited by the standards of Western Europe.<sup>4</sup> Iceland is an independent state having no armed forces and not having allowed significant ground, naval, or air defense installations on its soil. Using various deceptive stratagems and imaginative operationally orchestrated tactics,

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<sup>4</sup>Iceland (39,800 sq mi) is virtually the same size as Luzon (40,814 sq mi) in the Philippines, the largest land mass attacked as a single island target in World War II, in contrast to operations, for example, along the coast in this case, of New Guinea. The population density in West Germany is roughly 625 persons per sq mi compared with 5 in Iceland.

the Soviets should be able to seize Iceland almost immediately in an attack from a standing start and thus reinforce the fleet naval forces on station with a forward strategic pivot around which to develop their operation.

Along with the master stratagem of seizing Iceland, the Soviets have a vast array of ways to effect surprise and turn it into victory in combat. The Soviets especially emphasize the concept of diverse weapons as characterizing naval warfare today and stemming from the revolution in the means of production in the modern world. The Soviets note the impact of weapons platforms and weapons such as naval aircraft, submarines, guided missiles, torpedoes, and mines on naval warfare. In the west, one of these weapons has had a tendency to be neglected because of the sea control mentality of the traditionally important naval services, for example, the United States and United Kingdom. The weapon is the sea mine, and the Soviet navy, as a sea denial force, has had contrasting tendencies that can be characterized as placing greater emphasis on its employment. What are the possibilities in this situation for tactical and technical surprise on the part of the Soviet navy in conducting offensive operations to take advantage of surprise at the beginning of a war?

As a sea denial force, the Soviet navy has developed technologically sophisticated mines for use against both surface and submarine targets and others to be effective in shallow water in defense against amphibious landings. In defense of the Arctic



bastion, the Soviet navy has laid defensive mine fields to deny access to the Barents Sea through passage evident from a general study of maps of the area. The Soviet expertise in mines and minefields for obvious defensive necessities includes intriguing emphasis on the laying of mines from the air. With the Soviet penchant for applying force with large numbers, we would suspect that they have large numbers of naval aircraft capable of laying mines. Under such a set of circumstances, we should be prepared for technical and tactical surprise perhaps in the following pattern: the laying of mines by Soviet naval aircraft amongst NATO shipping in restricted maneuvering areas, e.g., Norwegian fjords, in order to force it out of certain operating areas and into others. Finally, particularly at the beginning of a war, and in the naval operation with the ACW mission in the Norwegian Sea, the Soviets may already have conceptualized what might be referred to as the blue water mine strike, the massed delivery by air of mines capable of damaging NATO surface vessels in deep water.

#### A Unique Technique for Understanding Soviet Naval Operational Art

In this study, we have defined Soviet naval operational art, described it in various ways, and attempted to show how it works by means of scenarios. The scenarios illustrated the Soviet style in applying the art to the planning and execution of the naval operation. We attempted in the scenario to present things through the minds of the Soviets according to their own thinking



on naval operational art. We are not alone in this. The attempt to understand Soviet ways of thinking have expanded over the years and is one of the most important lines of defense analysis taking place in the west at the present time. The activity should be reinforced and must be continued. The attempt to be Soviet is filled with wisdom but also with pitfall. Perhaps the most important hazard is that Western Europeans and Americans can only pretend to be Soviets; and, emigres and defectors will lack the immediacy and responsibilities of the real thing to be fully satisfying in compensating for our own foreign mentality vis-a-vis Soviets in war games and scenarios. The result is that in the most popular scenarios -- those showing the Soviets attacking and with Soviet style and motive so important -- we must have strong reservations about having adequately considered the factors judged by the Soviets as being really important.

To overcome the pitfalls of pretending to be Soviet, to understand at first hand the general factors and principles operating in launching surprise attacks, we could play the game of launching surprise naval attacks against the Soviets in theaters in which we would have good reason to fear the reverse. Understanding that these scenarios would have the purpose to force us to consider at first hand from the viewpoint of an attacker, the general range of factors and principles for consideration, we could justify them as (1) prudent, and (2) capable of leading to insights that would never be reached by any other way and could be essential to our survival. As concerns

the understanding of Soviet naval operational art, the application of U.S. naval strategy and tactics by Americans to the fundamental problems of surprise attack would be indirect but capable of extrapolation of lesson from one (American) to the other (Soviet).

Both Americans and Soviets agree, for example, that the same processes or regularities -- command and control, reconnaissance, massing of strikes, and preservation of force -- exist in the conduct of naval warfare.<sup>5</sup> They also agree that similar principles of action apply and that the most important are identical. By playing the game of Americans attacking, we would be forced to consider with the special immediacy of planning and conducting our own attack, the same general processes and principles necessary for the Soviets to consider. The great advance possible in the technique would be the complete authority with which we could say: here are the dangers and opportunities for us in launching surprise naval attacks in a given area. With the resulting special insight of one attacker into the mentality of the other, we would be able to focus on understanding Soviet style in naval operational art by statement-questions as follows: we know that adequate reconnaissance in a given form is necessary

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<sup>5</sup>See the inciteful comments in Lieutenant John R. Hafey, "The Soviet Art of Naval Warfare at the Operational Strategical Level," Course Paper, NS-3452, Naval Postgraduate School, 14 December 1987, pp. 4-6 including Figure 2. See also, Captain Wayne P. Hughes, Jr., USN, Retired, Fleet Tactics, Theory and Practice (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute, 1986), p. 38, and "Learn to Fight in a Modern Way," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 9, 1986, p. 8.

to achieve surprise against a target sited fairly deeply in the enemy side of the zone of operations; would Soviet naval operational art filter out the same factor as important and if so, what actions would it direct to accomplish the necessary results?





## CHAPTER NINE

### SEARCHING FOR NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART: IDEAS DERIVED FROM RECENT SOVIET BOOKS ON THE NAVY

Yet another way to get at Soviet naval operational art is to examine what the Soviets say about naval subjects in recent books as yet untranslated. The special concept used in this study involved a technique that might be termed "the dialogue." In this technique a tactical-technical expert on the subject of Soviet naval warfare links up with a linguist fluent in Russian and with a first-hand knowledge of the Soviet mentality. The tactical-technical expert is the leading person in the dialogue; he knows what he is looking for; he needs the assistance of the Soviet oriented, Russian linguist to get at it. In this study the tactical-technical expert was searching for Soviet naval operational art. He provided his cooperating Russian linguists qua Soviet experts with books on subjects like cooperation of army and navy and the performance of the Soviet navy in the Great Fatherland War. Once the surrogate Soviets completed their reading -- essentially a translation of the material -- the tactical-technical expert orchestrated a dialogue in which he received the translation paraphrased in general terms orally by the linguists qua Soviet experts and systematically discussed the application of the material to a better understanding of Soviet naval operational art.

In a recent (1983) book on the "cooperation of army and navy," the Soviet author writes on a subject of considerable naval interest with distracting generality.<sup>1</sup> He poses no question, no propositions. It is not clear what the issue is. It is clear that he considers that cooperation is important between army and navy. As concerns naval art and particularly naval operational art, it became clear that the Soviet author is focusing on the operational-strategical level of war and makes valuable statements concerning the origin of operations. The Soviet author, who can probably also be referred to as "the Soviets" because of his rank typical in this type of writing and innocuous, general approach, goes on to state that the essence of the modern naval operation is coordination because of the growing scope of war. In addition to the consistent theme of conscription and expanding forces of production, the author goes on to emphasize that modern war is conducted in four environments and thus coordination is the special service provided by operational art. This is a revealing theme. It shows the Soviets struggling with problems of command and control in modern war. It supports a view that they have found it both natural and necessary to insert another element of control into war intermediate between tactics and strategy.

The Soviet author emphasizes the importance of the conduct of modern war in four environments (land, sea, air, and space) in

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<sup>1</sup>Captain 1st Rank, Reserve, L.I. Ol'shtynskiy, Cooperation of Army and Navy (Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1983).

a way that triggered the working of the dialogue between the technical and Soviet experts. He grandly states an obvious, almost philosophical generality. Those in the west not familiar with the Soviet style of writing would consider such a statement to represent a boring, almost sophomoric style and not useful for understanding the modern military operation. The Soviets, however, are pedantic, high level, scientific formalizers. When they say that modern war is conducted in four environments they intend that the general, central point extends down to and be used as a guide to the conduct of the military operation. In a word, in the dialogue, the technical expert and special Russian linguist knew that the Soviet author was stating a scientific point of great importance, namely, that the modern military operation has been created by the necessity for increased coordination as exemplified by combat or combat support in four environments. For the Soviets coordination is a scientifically formal necessity of the (scientifically formal) military operation.

But how do these general statements with the meaning indicated above help us to understand the naval operational and distinguish it from other military operations? The dialogue could see that within the framework presented by the Soviet author that naval warfare holds a unique position making coordination in naval warfare more challenging and more important than in any of the other services at present. The army operation will demand, for example, operations on the ground and with air



support and qualifies for conducting operations in two environments with the addition of combat support from communications satellites in yet a third environment. The navy operation can demand operations undersea (inner space or under air), on the surface, in the air, as dictated by land in the landing operation, and in space as concerns combat support by space satellite. This formidable list of naval environments does not even include the implication of potential future operations on the ocean floor and undersea mountain ranges of the world by submarine forces which could well hold undersea terrain similarly to the way ground terrain is held by ground forces today. For purposes of understanding the Soviet naval operation and naval operational art, the dialogue concluded as follows: Soviet naval operational art, based on the fundamentals of the operating environment, would have a greater necessity to take account of the "scientific" necessities of coordination than any of the other services. In contrasting army operational art with naval, the dialogue suggests that naval operational art is army operational art with the scientific-historical principle of coordination exaggerated in importance in the case of the navy.

The Soviet author uses a historical approach in analyzing army and navy cooperation and presents examples of operational-strategical interest that are considerably different from those chosen in the west. The Soviets chose Norway, for example, in April-June 1940, as an important example of army-navy cooperation in war. In sharp contrast, western writers have a tendency to



focus their attention on the period from late 1942 to the end of the war -- the period of allied recovery and strategic offensive -- to ignore Norway outright, and to give relatively limited attention to the lessons of the great Japanese offensive operations in 1941-1942. The Soviets have a special fascination for the Norwegian Campaign which they identify as the first great joint strategic operation of World War II. The dialogue fastened on this point because of the bland assurance with which the Soviet author makes his generalizations. The dialogue sensed that the Soviets are telling us a lot about their style of thinking and the factors that are important to them. The dialogue concluded that the Soviets are wrestling in the case of the Norwegian Campaign with a disturbing reality that runs counter to their almost unlimited confidence in correlation of forces as the key to success in war. The Soviets point out in Norway that the Germans with weak forces and imperfect cooperation nonetheless won, like it or not, through the bold exploitation of surprise. As concerns naval operational art, the Soviet author is warning his readers that surprise on the strategic defensive and the unique Soviet principle of readiness on the potential strategic defensive may override all principles in importance at the beginning of blitz-style military or naval operations.

The Soviet author shows even more interest in the great Japanese naval offensive operations of 1941-1942. He is fascinated by the spatial scope of the Japanese naval operations and a boldness that was similar in quality to that of the Germans

in Norway. In the grand, unprecedented naval blitz of those years, the Japanese conducted several naval operations with distant targets in the vast space of the largest TV (Theater of War, or TW) in the history of warfare. The Soviet author notes that the Japanese required "perfect planning" to achieve victory in this opening strategic offensive. He goes on to emphasize the special importance of surprise and the "big strikes" at the beginning of the war. The Soviet author attaches special importance to the point that the first strikes were delivered in "every strategic direction," i.e., virtually simultaneously along the mean axis in every TVD (TSMAs) of the entire TV (TW).<sup>2</sup> The Soviet author is visibly impressed by the skill of Japanese naval and naval operational art in coordinating surprise and massing of strikes among several TVDs (TSMAs). The dialogue was stimulated to conclude that the Soviets are warning their own armed forces of the tremendous potential of surprise attack.

The Soviet authority continues on to describe the weaknesses of Japanese plans in 1941-42, presenting more opportunities for the dialogue experts to put together factors that the Soviets consider important in naval operational art. In criticizing Japanese plans, he notes that they depended too much on the weakness of the opposing allied forces and the achievement of complete surprise. The authority makes the point that "the Anglo-Americans" had no large ground forces in the Pacific and

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<sup>2</sup>Ol'shtynskiy, Cooperation Army Navy, p. 51.

little sea lift capability for the modest forces there. Continuing in this vein, he makes two very different points using the same picture of surprise attack at the beginning of a war. The authority comments that the Japanese had no fall-back plans for army-navy cooperation in case of the failure of surprise. The dialogue sensed here that the Soviets are warning themselves as part of their own naval operational art to hold back an effective operational-strategic reserve. One of the principles of Soviet naval operational art is the reconstitution of reserves and the authority seems to be using the vast Japanese historical example to illustrate the principle.

The authority then makes an argument in a rather different direction. He notes that the thin deployment of allied ground forces in the Pacific allowed the Japanese to pace the Pacific blitz to the operations of very strong naval forces and relatively weak army formations. Depending almost overwhelmingly on surprise and the initial weakness of the allies, the Japanese advances on the main strategic axes had to be fast. Those advances were along naval strategic axes and were favored by the accompanying relatively small Japanese ground forces strong enough to seize key naval targets but small enough to contribute to a blitz tempo of the predominating naval operations. The dialogue began to suspect here, that the Soviet authority was suggesting that the normal rules and ratios of correlation of forces may not apply in the opening stages of a blitz war. The suspicions of the dialogue were strengthened as the authority



went on to note that later in the war the naval dominated American forces in the Pacific depended on excessive forces and means characterized by almost outlandish air supremacy. The Soviet author claims that operational-strategic opportunities were missed by the Americans as a result of their insistence on extreme force ratios. At this point, the dialogue observed a coherent picture in which the Soviet naval authority had said that in the opening stages of a great blitz surprise allows boldly led modestly sized forces to achieve victory in defiance of normally demanded force ratios. The subtlety in understanding Japanese success and applying it to estimating the possibilities of Soviet success in an opening blitz, is that as weak as Japanese forces often were, they were strong enough in supporting aviation and naval gunfire to win against the allied forces that mobility and surprise allowed them to concentrate against.

There are some ironies that can be observed at this point in the discussions of the Soviet authority. Joseph Stalin has been noted as commenting on the crucial factor of development and production of war materiel that the good enough is forever the enemy of the even better. Stalin made this comment early in the Great Fatherland War and not surprisingly the Soviets adhered to the principle being expressed. Although Stalin was demanding large quantities of weapons in this statement, he was stating perhaps even more emphatically the need for immediate decisive results. We could take Stalin's statement and criticize the operational style of the strategic offensive in the Great



Fatherland War and Soviet emphasis today on perhaps overly favorable correlations of force to win in war. As concerns Soviet military operational art today, the Soviets may be doing some surprising reevaluations of correlation of forces based on observations of the Japanese and Germans in 1941-42 and characterized by the application of lesser force ratios counterbalanced by the effects of deception, surprise, and coordination. In the case of naval operational art, we would expect emphasis on the importance of deception, surprise, and coordination exaggerated over that in army operational art and involving "uncharacteristically" bold naval operations at the beginning of surprise offensive operations.

The Soviet author makes at least one more point that reinforces the arguments above. He describes U.S. naval operations in the period of the strategic offensives of 1943-45 as being conducted against much stronger resistance than that faced by the Japanese in 1941-42. He elaborates by noting that the U.S. navy had to employ relatively much stronger carrier aviation forces and amphibious forces in its strategic offensives than the Japanese earlier. Then, arguing from the later American experience he contrasts it once again with the Japanese by noting that the greater the surprise that can be achieved in a naval operation the less the need for the exaggerated air supremacy that characterizes the well-known American part of the war in the Pacific particularly in 1944-45.

Finally, toward the end of the work, the Soviet authority makes somewhat startling comments about the current Soviet navy's role on the maritime flanks of the army. After some uninspired truisms to the effect that operational-tactical cooperation between army and navy should be close and that naval combat should take place to the full depth of the opposing enemy forces, the author begins to discuss the navy's time-honored strategic mission to interfere with enemy SLOCs and secure the maritime flanks of the army. The author appears to be in process of restating another conservative truism that the Soviet navy secures the maritime flanks of the army and interferes with the coastal SLOCs of the enemy, e.g., as in the Baltic, 1944-45. The expected truism does not develop, though, with the Soviet author commenting that interfering with enemy SLOCs and protection of the flanks of the ground forces gives the Soviet navy a new mission to obtain maritime supremacy. The dialogue interpreted this line of argument as signalling new possibilities for Soviet naval warfare in which the usual aggressive contention in a sea denial mode with a strong enemy, e.g., the Germans in the Baltic, is replaced by something really new. The experts conducting the dialogue sensed that the Soviet navy is still an oceanic sea denial force but may already have become a maritime flank, sea control force. If such is the case, the Soviets can be counted on to fight for sea control in the blue water of the Norwegian Sea -- the great northern maritime flank of the Soviet forces in Western Europe.

For the Soviets, the Great Fatherland War continues to be a measure of both accomplishment then (1941-45) and change and contrast now (1988). In a fairly recent (1980) book, the Soviet author presents a succinct and coherent picture of the Soviet navy in the War while pursuing the central theme of its operational-strategic use.<sup>3</sup> The book contains less of the ideological baggage, e.g., references to Marxism-Leninism and innocuous overgeneralization to avoid ideological error, than is found so often in Soviet military history. For readers who are familiar with the naval campaigns in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean in World War II, the book must be jarring. The Soviet author unwittingly makes a case for those who know the scale of action and the impact of naval warfare in other theaters, that Soviet naval warfare contributed only minor effects in the War. This is true for a variety of reasons, some having little to do with the Soviet navy itself and in spite of the impressive Soviet production effort in creating the largest submarine fleet in the world by 1939.

The Soviet authority presents the view that the Soviet Union faced potential war against a strong capitalist coalition in the 1920s and 1930s. Soviet weaknesses were compounded by the defeat of Imperial Russia in the war by late 1917 and the allied intervention in peripheral maritime areas in the Black Sea, the Barents Sea, and at Vladivostock in the Far East. The Russian

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<sup>3</sup>The author and book: A.B. Vasov, The Fleet in the Great Fatherland War, 1941-1945, The Experience of Operational Strategic Use (Moscow: Academy of Sciences, Nawka, 1980).



defeat by the Germans and intervention by the allies was reflected in heavy losses in ships, damage to bases, and loss of bases and arsenals, for example, in the Baltic. Russia collapsed as a naval power in the period 1917-1921 and Soviet Russian began life with feeble naval forces. The British, for example, for a hundred years before this time, had had a consistent policy of closed Turkish Straits aimed at keeping a strong Imperial Black Sea fleet from entering the Mediterranean. In 1923, in a dramatic reversal of policy at Lausanne, the British agreed to the partial opening of the Straits reflecting the extraordinary naval weakness of the Soviet Russians in the Black Sea and elsewhere. With the Imperial Russian fleet having melted away, the Soviets faced a nightmare capitalist coalition of the United States, Britain, Japan, and France, each with a powerful fleet of its own.

The Soviet authority describes the development of a "small war" strategy for the navy to defend against a coalition anticipated to be so strong that a similarly styled Soviet navy was out of the question to develop.<sup>4</sup> The Soviets considered that mass ground armies would dominate a war in extended battles involving deep maneuvers. The navy would have the mission to defend the maritime flanks of the Soviet ground armies. The Soviets realized that the navy could not be allotted the resources to build the vast surface ship fleet necessary to challenge the capitalist coalition in blue water. The Soviet

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 43.



navy could not win big naval battles on blue water against the capitalist surface fleets. The author states that without sufficient forces to conduct operations in the open seas, the Soviet navy was forced to concentrate on strikes on the inshore zone. The Soviet navy developed relatively small coastal-type submarines, mines, coastal artillery, and land-based naval aviation to conduct the anticipated offshore naval acts. The Soviets envisioned the naval war as one in which inferior Soviet naval forces would conduct successful naval operations in gray water on the maritime flanks of the army.

The Soviet authority describes the Soviet naval operation under a small war strategy as being either independent or joint. The most important independent naval operation decided upon by the navy was against the maritime communications of the enemy. The most important joint operations were landing operations and coastal defense operations in coastal areas on the maritime flanks of the army. The picture is one of enormous realism and conservatism on the part of the Soviets. With characteristic energy and focus on numbers, they managed to equip themselves with more than 225 coastal-style submarines by the eve of World War II, parallel quantities of mines, and a surprising amount of naval aviation. How does naval operational art fit into this picture? The Soviets describe naval operational art as dominated by the skills required (1) to find and attack the enemy, and (2) to inflict powerful blows of the different branches of the navy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

From a slightly different viewpoint, the Soviets also describe that the "essence" of the small war strategy was the skill in naval operational art of inflicting short, decisive strikes with a variety of naval forces. In the context of the presentation, these strikes would be both in independent operations against enemy sea communications and joint operations with the army in landings and defense and attack of naval bases and arsenals in the coastal areas.

In spite of effective thinking about the realistic development of the navy in the 1920s and 1930s and an effective strategy for its employment, the Soviet authority makes it clear that a whole series of deficiencies was revealed in the theory of naval art in the opening stages of the Great Fatherland War. He makes an especially interesting point for potential application to the Northeast Atlantic today that naval raids were not examined against enemy bases or communications. At the beginning of the Great Fatherland War, the Soviets had placed their strongest fleet in the Baltic. Perhaps the most telling commentary on the style and effectiveness of the Soviet navy can be found in the use of this force. This powerful fleet allowed itself to be bottled up in the Gulf of Finland by relatively weak German naval and air forces. It suffered heavy losses through aerial attack culminating in the sinking of the battleship, October Revolution, by a three-aircraft attacking flight of German dive bombers, one of which sunk the vessel with a single large bomb. As the relatively weak German forces in Army Group

North (e.g., the overall ratio ground forces, German-Soviet, was approximately 1:1) closed in around Leningrad in the period July-September 1941, the Soviets committed approximately 87,000 "sailors" to the defense of the city as ground infantry and artillery.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, although also under different strategic circumstances, the Soviet Black Sea Fleet supported unsuccessful but extended sieges at Odessa and Sevastopol, a bold and effective landing at Kerch and Feodosiya (December 1941-January 1942), and a successful defense of Novorossisk.

As the Soviets shifted entirely to the strategic offensive by late 1943, the navy began to conduct independent fleet operations against German grey water SLOCs in the Black, Baltic, and Barents Seas. These modest operations against severely weakened German air, ground, and naval forces are the grandfather of the present-day Soviet independent naval operation associated with the strategic naval missions of disruption of NATO SLOCs, ACW, A-AAW, and destruction of missile submarines. The independent naval operation demanded changes in the methods of commanding and controlling naval operations. The Soviet author elaborates on the changes in the style of command showing historical precedents that are potentially valuable for understanding how the Soviets would command both independent and joint operations today. In the period of the strategic defensive the Soviet land fronts successfully controlled joint operations through strong naval staff groups at front headquarters. As the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

Soviets moved into the period of the strategic offensive, they effected a new style that is a potential valuable forecast of how they would command in a surprise Soviet strategic offensive or "counteroffensive" at the beginning of an extended conventional war today. The Soviets almost instinctively shifted command up the line, high as possible, into the Stavka itself which in turn used as its working organs the People's Commissariat of the Navy and the Main Navy Staff to direct the fleets in naval operations independent of the great fronts. Here we have historical precedent for the naval fleet headquarters to apply the skill of naval operational art to offensively oriented naval operations unified with the overall military situation through the main naval staff into the General Staff and Stavka-VGK.



## CHAPTER TEN

### SUMMARY, OBSERVATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

There is a Soviet naval operational art. It is real. The Soviets are in deadly earnest about it. The chapters of this study have pieced together a picture that is summarized below. For the sake of succinctness and consistency, each point is presented in terms of the direction from which Soviet naval operational art was approached:

#### From the Viewpoint of the Soviet Navy:

Soviet naval operational art is the scientific skill of planning and conducting the aggregate of simultaneous and successive engagements, strikes, and maneuvers of naval forces, coordinated and interrelated by objective, mission, place, and time for purposes of repelling an aggressor in ocean and sea TVDs (TSMAs), often to accomplish operational-strategic or operational missions in coordination with forces of other branches of the armed forces.

#### From the Viewpoint of Soviet Military Science:

Soviet military science is the system of knowledge dealing with the nature and laws of war, the preparation of the armed forces and the country for war, and the methods of waging it. The most important component of military science is Soviet military art which in turn includes Soviet military strategy.

For the Soviets, there is only one unified Soviet military strategy and it plays the leading role in the theory of the navy, the included theory of naval art, and the strategic employment of the navy. Soviet military strategy defines the tasks and the methods of Soviet naval operational art through the intermediaries of the theory of the navy and the theory of naval art.

From the Viewpoint of an Unfriendly Western Critic:

Soviet naval operational art is a Soviet naval strategic skill based on an ideologically driven, pseudo-scientific, highly systematic, pedantic, formalism claiming to assure the achievement of military strategic goals in TVDs (TSMAs) in time of war.

From the Viewpoint of a U.S. Naval Officer's Master's Level Thesis:

Soviet naval operational art is the Soviet naval skill of preparing and executing a naval operational plan -- a plan designed to achieve strategic military goals in a TVD (TSMA).

In planning the naval operation, the Soviet naval commander and staff practice operational art by constructing on paper the tactical engagements, strikes, and maneuvers that sequentially or simultaneously are required to achieve centrally directed, unified strategic goals.

In executing the naval operation, the Soviet naval commander and staff practice operational art by stringing together the

multiple tactical engagements strikes, and maneuvers required by modern large navies to achieve strategic military goals.

From the Viewpoint of Science:

For the Soviets, naval operational art is derived from the Marxist-Leninist world historical, scientific dialectic (or, logic) which the Soviets claim presents scientific logic superior to any other for the understanding of world history and the included phenomenon of war.

From the Viewpoint of Modern History:

Modern forces of production and conscription have combined to create a new form of fleet combat activity -- the naval operation. Soviet naval operational art developed as the skill of preparing for and conducting the independent naval operation, and, especially in coastal waters, the combined operation with other branches of the armed forces.

From the Viewpoint of Metaphor (Soviet naval operational art is noted for useful purpose to be something that characterizes it to some degree but with which it is not completely interchangeable. The overstated characterization is effective in sorting out the high points of naval operational art):

Soviet naval operational art (SNOA) is Soviet Russian mentality (i.e., characteristic of mind), or, alternately, SNOA is a Soviet Russian style of thinking. SNOA is Soviet social science applied to armed warfare.

SNOA is a layer of Soviet political, bureaucratically styled control.

SNOA is Soviet Russian military paternalism.

SNOA is Soviet Russian pedantic formalism.

SNOA is Socialist realism (i.e., a kind of neo-classicism in which certain things must be observed).

SNOA is Soviet military science.

SNOA is severely centralized and unified Soviet military strategy.

SNOA is the modern Soviet military operation.

SNOA is the Soviet naval operation.

SNOA is the plan to accomplish Soviet naval strategic missions through Soviet naval tactics.

SNOA is the link between Soviet naval strategic missions and Soviet naval tactics.

SNOA is the link between Soviet Military strategy and Soviet naval tactics.

SNOA is modern history.

SNOA is Soviet naval history (i.e., Soviet empirical experience of war).

SNOA is the Kerch-Feodosiya joint landing operation (December 1941-January 1942).

SNOA is the independent Soviet naval operation against German SLOCs in the Baltic (1944-45).

SNOA is cunning and operational camouflage applied to the achievement of surprise.



SNOA is deception and surprise in the Soviet naval operation.

SNOA is the preemptive, surprise massed strike of naval fires against the strongest enemy fleet targets.

SNOA is the establishment of correlations of forces adequate enough to achieve the strategic goals of the naval operation.

SNOA is the coordination of engagements, strikes, and maneuvers in an oceanic or maritime TVD (TSMA) to accomplish naval strategic missions.

SNOA (on the strategic offensive) is deception, surprise, and preemptive massing of strikes.

SNOA (on the military strategic offensive but the naval strategic defensive) is deception, surprise, preemptive massing of strikes and willingness to absorb casualties and damage.

SNOA (on the strategic defensive) is readiness and preservation of reserve.

SNOA is Soviet army operational art applied at sea.

SNOA is Soviet army operational art exaggerated in every principle of the art.



FIVE PRINCIPLES OF NAVAL ART  
(under today's conditions)

1. Readiness
2. Surprise
3. Coordination
4. Maneuver
5. Massing

SIX METHODS TO ACCOMPLISH SURPRISE

1. Deception through camouflage, misinformation, and feints
2. Secrecy
3. Concealment of preparation
4. Use of new weapons or tactics
5. Choice of time and axis of attack
6. Speed of maneuver or decisiveness of action

ELEVEN GENERAL PRINCIPLES  
OF SOVIET MILITARY ART

1. Readiness
2. Surprise (& initiative)
3. Use of all assets
4. Coordination
5. Concentration on main axis
6. Defeat of enemy in full depth of his deployment
7. Calculation & application of political-moral factors
8. Continuous troop control
9. Ongoing resolution of emerging problems
10. Complete continuous rear support
11. Timely restoration of reserve

SEVEN SPECIFIC FEATURES THAT  
CHARACTERIZE THE MODERN NAVAL  
BATTLE\*

1. Activism/determinism
2. Spatial scope (great)
3. High level of results (superiority of weapons over targets)
4. Dynamic nature (recon-strike revolution)
5. Unexpectedness of action (surprise, deception, speed of action, feints are of increased importance)
6. Diversity of methods (use of mixed forces)
7. Electronic warfare (the material base of modern weapons is electronic)

\* V. Alekseyev, "Characteristic Features of Contemporary Naval Battles," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 10, 1986, pp. 17-21.

APPENDIX ONE

VARIOUS FACTORS AFFECTING SOVIET NAVAL OPERATIONAL ART

FOUR PROCESSES THAT DETERMINE  
OUTCOME OF COMBAT AT SEA\*

1. Quantity and quality of weapons
2. Art of C2
3. Massing of strikes unexpectedly against the strongest target along the weakest path of resistance
4. Preservation of force

SAVKIN: SEVEN GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF OPERATIONAL ART  
(c. 1959)\*\*

1. Mobility
2. Concentrating at decisive place and time
3. Surprise
4. Combat activeness
5. Preservation of combat effectiveness
6. Conformity of goal & plan of operation (battle) to real world
7. Coordination

\* "Learn to Fight in a Modern Way," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 9, 1986, p. 8.

\*\* V. Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Soviet Operational Art and Tactics (A Soviet View), (Moscow, 1972), Tr by US Air Force, p. 115.

\*\*\* K. Stalbo, "Some Issues of the Theory of the Development and Employment of the Navy," Morskoy Sbornik, No. 4, 1981.

SEVEN STRATEGIC MISSIONS OF SOVIET  
NAVAL OPERATION TO ACHIEVE  
STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Disrupt enemy SLOCs
2. Defend Soviet SLOCs and bases
3. Defeat enemy naval forces in closed & open seas and ocean areas contiguous with coasts
4. Destroy enemy land targets
5. Destroy enemy carrier groupings
6. Destroy enemy ASW forces
7. Destroy enemy missile submarines

STALBO: EIGHT FEATURES INHERENT IN  
NAVAL WARFARE\*\*\*

1. Offensive naval actions at sea do not attempt to seize terrain (except landing and antilanding operations)
2. Defensive naval actions often do not have purpose to hold terrain
3. In naval warfare, objectives are achieved by attack against the strongest targets
4. In naval warfare, deployment and redeployment may take weeks
5. The scope of naval operations may easily be global
6. The Navy conducts armed warfare in four terrain media (sea, undersea, land, air)
7. Fleets employ extraordinarily diverse weapons
8. Some naval forces are severely constrained by weather
9. (Stolfi Addendum) In naval warfare deployment for war and redeployment in war takes place over hostile terrain

APPENDIX ONE (continued)



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